With Ink and Crozier

Richard Gunder

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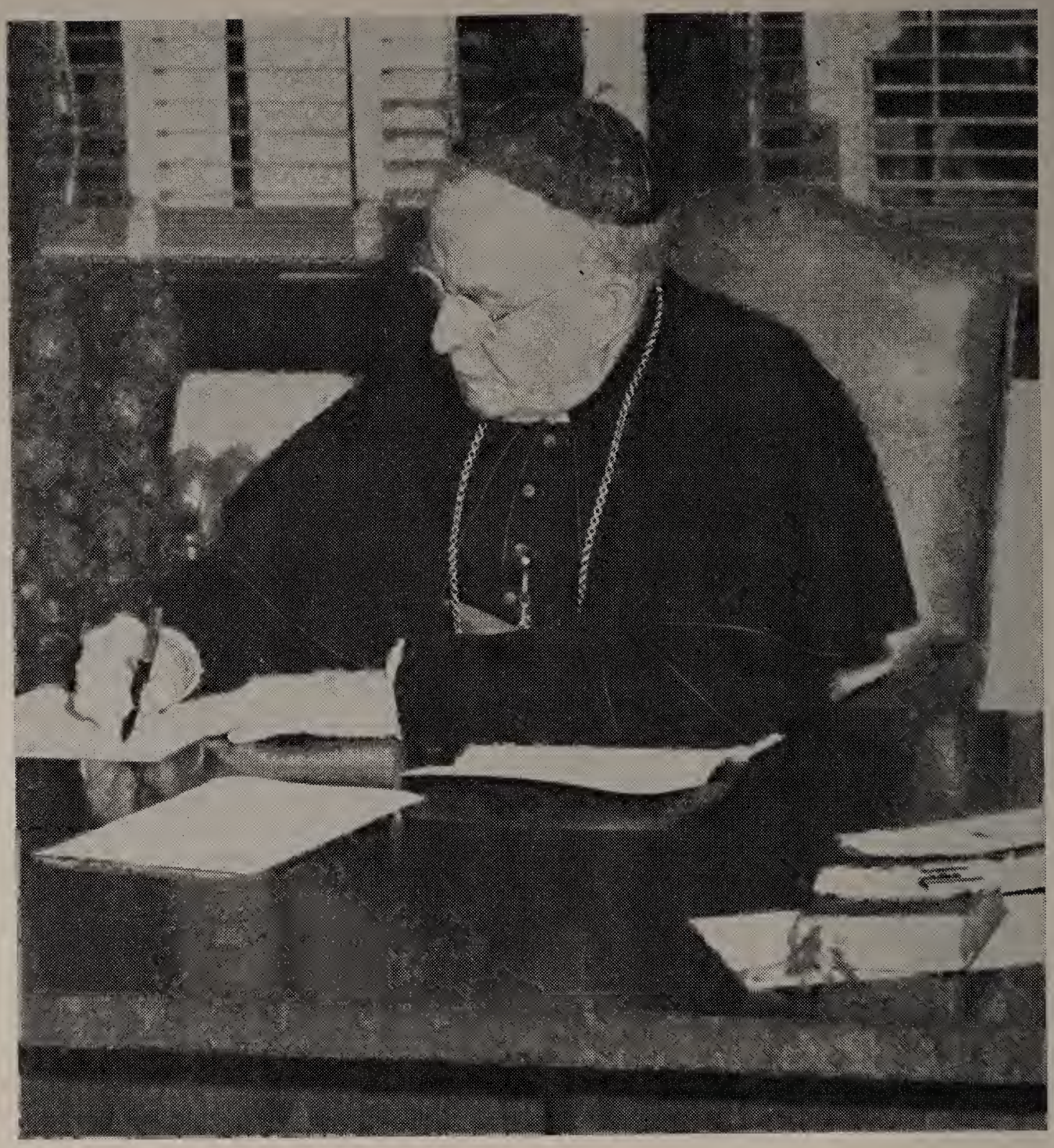


Bishop Noll at his editorial desk

With Ink and Crozier

A BIOGRAPHY

of

John Francis Noll

Fifth Bishop of Fort Wayne

and

Founder of Our Sunday Visitor

By Richard Ginder

INTRODUCTION

The Biography of Bishop Noll is necessarily the story of the Church in the United States in the past fifty years. There are some few rare individuals whose lives are so intertwined with the events in their arena of living that they epitomize in themselves whole phases of the history of their times. Bishop Noll is one of these individuals. His very living has been so much a part of the apostolate of the Church that despite his charm of personality and outstanding gifts, we have come to look upon him as the symbol of something greater than an individual and yet something which in the strange reaches of zeal is integrated in him.

Bishop Noll loves people because he loves God. He is not a philanthropist in the ordinary sense of the word. He simply loves people because they are God's people. When he was a young priest and in his reading discovered wide ignorance of the teaching of the Church, he was pained and suffered. He hated ignorance but loved the ignorant. A man of action, he went about doing something to help the ignorant. *Our Sunday Visitor* came out of his efforts—little at first and then nationwide. It spells his life. His reaches widened, but as priest and bishop it has been the same, genial, courageous Father Noll at work. To help men know the truth about the Church, and to spur the knowing to action for the Church, is the effort of these fifty years.

He grew through the years in his work and became a part in all our work for Holy Church. In thousands of homes his name is revered. Out over the lone mission places he works in his Catechists. He strenuously seeks

to remove occasions of sin in our communities and pleads for the stopping of the sale and distribution of degrading corrupting printed matter. The statue of Christ, the Light of the World, on the facade of the National Catholic Welfare Conference Building at Washington sums up his life-long sermon to the modern world. He has an ambition, and that is to see the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception at the Catholic University completed and is well on his way to realizing it.

I have said patent things about Bishop Noll. The reader will get a better picture in this volume. If after finishing it he wants to put the finishing touches to it, my advice to him is to go to the Diocese of Fort Wayne and listen to the priests and people talk about their Bishop.

✠ Cardinal Samuel Stritch

Archbishop of Chicago

Author's Foreword

THE author feels that a word of explanation is called for in submitting the matter which follows. "With Ink and Crozier" was written first of all for Bishop Noll's millions of devoted friends reading *Our Sunday Visitor.* It was published there serially, week after week, starting June 28, 1950, with the idea of eventual publication in book form.

His Excellency had celebrated his Golden Jubilee in the priesthood in 1948 and the Silver anniversary of his Episcopate occurred on June 30, 1950. The publication of this little book will now coincide with the completion of *Our Sunday Visitor's* 40th year.

These are the considerations that urged the inclusion of the beautiful encomia delivered by His Eminence, Samuel Cardinal Stritch, Archbishop of Chicago and the Most Rev. Michael J. Ready, Bishop of Columbus and former executive secretary of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, given in Fort Wayne on Bishop Noll's Silver Jubilee in the Episcopate.

CHAPTER ONE

The Making Of A Priest

ALONG the eastern coastline of the United States, stretching like a gigantic, twisted serpent from Maine to Florida, lies the chain of mountains called the Appalachians. To the east, on the foothills running down from the peaks, and on the plains that rise from the shores of the Atlantic, lie the great cities of the eastern seaboard, from Boston in the North to Charleston in the South.

Between these mountains and the ocean came the beginning of the growth of America. From all the nations of Europe came the adventurers, the oppressed, the poor, the wealthy; and in the new world of the Americas they found home, and food, and land, and a great world of rugged youth that grew with the pioneers into a powerful maturity. As the colonists moved in, the Indians moved out, till the mountains became the dividing line between the civilization of Europe along the coast, and the terror of the savage unknown that lay across the rest of the continent.

With the opening of the nineteenth century an expedition was sent into this vast wilderness, led by two of the best Indian fighters of the country, Lewis and Clark. They came back with tales that warmed the hearts of the adventurers. Far to the west there was another chain of mountains, giants that rose thousands of feet into the sky, till their snow-capped peaks were lost in mists of clouds. Beyond the mountains another rich plain stretched to another ocean, the Pacific. These were the Rocky Mountains that bounded the western

coast of America as the Appalachians bounded the eastern coast, and between the two chains of mountains lay a plain of forests and fields, of rich land and swift rivers, of fish that glittered in the streams in the morning sun, and of huge buffaloes that shook the earth with the thunder of their hoofs across the western prairies. There was wealth undreamed of beyond the eastern mountains, wealth that would have to be wrested from the hands of the Indian tribes that roamed their own small domains across the central plain.

From the small villages and towns of Kentucky, Ohio, and Pennsylvania the wagon trains moved out, and the winning of the west was begun. They broke their own trails, broke them with sweat, and blood, and death, pushing ever onward across the country, till by the end of the first half of the century the Mississippi had become the unofficial western boundary of civilization, with only the Mormons in Utah and the gold-hunters in California beyond the Father of Waters.

Between the eastern coastline and the Mississippi lay the State of Indiana, the first conquest in the settling of the West, and in the northeast corner of that state lay the small village of Fort Wayne, named after Anthony Wayne, who erected a fort, from which a watchful eye was kept on the Miami Indians. Early in the century it had become a major outpost of the Army, and from the post had gone forth expeditions of cavalry against the Indians who had risen to drive the white settlers out of the Ohio Valley. Around the post was formed the village of Fort Wayne—people eager to settle on the rich farm land. Through the village passed the endless wagon trains and the boats carrying cargo on the Erie Canal, connecting Toledo on Lake Erie and the White River beyond Lafayette. With

the dropping off of the Indian pioneers the village quickly grew into a fair-sized community. It was into this city, in 1875, that John Francis Noll was born.

Grandfather Noll, a tailor by trade, had emigrated from Germany in 1836, when the population of Fort Wayne varied between a few hundred and a few thousand, depending on traffic on the Erie Canal and the movements of the numerous wagon trains.

John Francis, his grandson, was the sixth child of John George, who had been born only a few years after the arrival of the family in Fort Wayne in 1841. His wife, Anna Ford, had been born in London of Irish parents. She had come to America as a young girl, and had married John George where she, too, had settled, in the town of Fort Wayne. They had worked together in caring for their growing family in this growing land, but she was not destined to see the greatness into which this, her sixth child, was to grow. Less than four years after his birth, less than six months after the birth of her next child, Loretto, she died. Her memory was lost in the mists of childhood for her young son, but she was clear in his heart long years later when he bent over the altar in prayer.

The years of youth moved swiftly for the boy. Into his home came a new woman, his father's second wife, Mary McCleary—a recent convert—and she became all the mother a boy could need. From her he learned his first lessons, and by her was sent to the Cathedral School, taught by the Holy Cross Brothers. With the infants arriving at regular intervals (John Francis was to have eighteen brothers and sisters), Mary Noll led a busy life indeed. And in a family of that size there was little danger that John, or any of the children, would be pampered or spoiled!

At the age of thirteen a memorable landmark in his life was passed. It was at that age, while he was in the eighth grade, that he received his first Holy Communion, on Whitsunday of 1888, and that same afternoon he was confirmed by Bishop Dwenger, second Bishop of Fort Wayne. It was a spiritual landmark, but much more than that.

With the reception of these sacraments he had become a fullfledged member of the Catholic Church, for in the reception of Communion he had become one with his own God for those few minutes the Sacred Host remained within him, and in Confirmation he had become a militant soldier in the army of Christ. It was only the basic training of his first months as a soldier, training that was to grow till he would be commissioned a General in the same army.

For several years John had served at the altar—first at Benediction, where it was comparatively simple to kneel with the priest, hold the incense boat for his use, and draw back the cope while he swung the clouds of blue fragrance up to the Blessed Sacrament exposed on the altar. Then came the study of the Latin responses at Mass, and the final thrill of actually participating in the Sacrifice that is the center of the Catholic Liturgy. He watched the priest prepare for the moment about which the Mass centered, saw him bend over the bread to whisper the words of Consecration, and over the wine to whisper similar words. Now the priest held not bread nor wine, but the very Christ they worshipped.

Morning after morning the immensity of a vocation to the priesthood grew on John. The whole mystical nature of childhood was filled with the realization of the great vocation of those men who daily called God down

to the altar, and from the realization came the desire to become one of them.

For the first years he kept his thoughts to himself. Most of the other boys in his class saw the same greatness in the priest, and spoke in vague terms of their own impulse to join the ranks of the priesthood. But for John it was too personal, too real, too intense, to bring it out now when it might seem only another boyish dream. Instead he studied the priests around him, and with study their importance was more deeply impressed on his mind. He saw them bringing the children into the world of grace at baptism, and sending forth their souls to God at death; from their hands came the Holy Communion for the souls and bodies of the just, and from their hands and lips came the words of absolution and the blessing for the sinners in the darkness of the confessional. Theirs was a life of strange contrasts, a life of blessing of pleasures they could not enjoy themselves, a life wedded to sacrifices they would not impose on others. It was a difficult life, he could see, but it was the life he had chosen to lead.

Although he had kept silent on the matter, he had not hidden it very well. One day after Mass, while he was serving Father Thomas O'Leary, an assistant at the Cathedral, the priest, after he had unvested, turned to the boy:

"Johnny, have you ever thought of the priesthood?"

"Yes, I have Father," he replied, "I've thought about it a lot during the past year." He hesitated a moment. "Honestly, I've just been waiting for someone to tell me how to arrange it, and where to go."

The priest nodded. "I thought as much, Johnny, and some of the other Fathers thought I'd better talk to

you. How about dropping around to see me this afternoon, and we'll talk about it?"

John stopped at the rectory after school, and the two sat down for the first of many talks on the vocation of the priest. Within a few weeks the family heard about it, and by the following September he was ready to enter St. Lawrence College, the preparatory seminary conducted by the Capuchin Franciscans at Mount Calvary, Wisconsin.

2.

The seminary was a world of its own. Like every other boy, he had come to St. Lawrence from a well disciplined home, used to taking care of himself, well used to hardship after the long summer days spent at work in a Fort Wayne dry-goods store. But even this had not prepared him for all the rigors of seminary life.

Each morning he was awakened at five-thirty. He washed and dressed in silence, and went to the village church for morning prayer and meditation. After meditation came Mass. Returning to the college building he went upstairs to the dormitory where he made his bed, again in complete silence, and from there he went to breakfast, which consisted of a thick slice of home-made bread and a bowl of barley coffee. There was a short break after this, a half-hour for the boys to relax while getting ready for classes.

Before noon, the seminarians gathered in the chapel for their daily examination of conscience—a searching and ferreting into the soul to root out some particular fault, or to cultivate one specific virtue. For ten minutes they knelt there in earnest converse with God and their souls; then they went to dinner. At table there was no

talking, conversation being supplemented by the reading of a pious book from a lectern in the center of the refectory. There was study and class again in the afternoon, with an hour or more of recreation, followed by the recitation of the rosary and spiritual reading. Supper came, and with supper the reading in the refectory, and after an hour's recreation study till night-prayer at nine.

Newspapers and magazines were banned. No one left the grounds without permission, and even the sports program was confined to intra-mural competition. There was no daily contact with the world outside the seminary, but rather a life of study and contemplation of the sublime vocation he had chosen. But out of this life was to come knowledge and self-reliance, the two characteristics which, allied to a deep spirituality, are the marks of the true priest.

It was a hard life. He found himself waking in the darkness before dawn, half-asleep, trying to wash his brain clear with the cold water he dashed on his face. Sometimes the church was so cold that as he knelt shivering he could hardly concentrate on his prayers. Daily the studies became more involved, because the text books from which Johnny must learn his Latin, Greek, and French were in the German language, of which he did not know a word when he entered St. Lawrence College. A knowledge of German was needed in nearly every parish those days, and later the boy would be very grateful to the Capuchins for providing him with the opportunity of learning it well. At times the hours for preparation of classwork seemed hopelessly inadequate for the amount of work assigned. At night he was exhausted when he lay down to sleep, and the morning bell rang again too soon.

A few of the other boys could not take it. They became lost in a maze of studies, of prayer, and could not grope their way out into an organized life under the constant pressure. After a while they left, missed for a few days, but lost in the never-ending whirl that flowed about the seminarians. Was it too hard? No, but it was not easy. You do not ask a boy to give up his life to God, to sacrifice his body and soul and mind for the rest of his life, without testing him to the breaking point. There is no room here for false kindness, no time to prod along a reluctant student into a way of life that will be too difficult for him. Theirs was the vocation of the shepherd; there was no room for sheep.

The cold was the most trying element. There was no running water in the house, so the students had to carry water in tubs from an outside well to the third floor. Morning sometimes found a thin edge of ice around the water. There was no compensating warmth in the village church, where the students went for Mass, and where there was heat only on weekends during the cold Wisconsin winters. The flame of devotion had to burn high to live through it.

And so the days went by, and became weeks, and months, and years. The whirlpool slowed, and bubbled away into a deepening stream, and the pattern of life became clear to him again. Somehow the studies were done, and the pressure became the normal atmosphere of life. The impossible became daily routine. Examinations came, long exhaustive tests, and after the examinations other subjects to be mastered. High school slipped by, and the first year of college, till in his nineteenth year he was ready for the major seminary at Mount Saint Mary's in Cincinnati. This was the second big step in his life.

John had himself fitted for his first tailored cassock. He ordered his clerical vest, birettum, and a dozen Roman collars. His second mother began making his surplices. All these he would be privileged to wear as a major seminarian. Though he had worn the cassock as an altar boy, it had been an old worn poplin hand-me-down. This cassock, on the other hand, was serge, heavy, replete with deep cuffs, with pockets in all sorts of mysterious places. It hugged his throat neatly, and dropped in ample folds to his heels. To his family it was almost as though he were already a priest.

3.

The major seminary was something of a pleasant experience for John after the hard years at Mount Calvary. The discipline was strict, but with maturity the seminarians had taken upon themselves a greater portion of the responsibility for their work. Each had his own room, with more liberty to follow his own particular bent in studies in addition to the work done in common. On free-days, permission might be had to go shopping in the city, or to stroll with fellow-students on a sight-seeing tour. But the studies, too, were altogether different.

In his courses at Mount Calvary, particularly in the history classes, the names of the great thinkers of antiquity had come before John, and in his mind there was a vague accounting of names and places, and even an occasional date. Plato, Aristotle, Sophocles, the ancient Greeks who lived some time before Christ, names telescoped into a single period, a single moment of time—these were familiar to him. Augustine, Aquinas—he knew that these were after Christ, and that there was a fellow named Boethius, who became Boece in a long and half-

forgotten translation of Chaucer. But they were little more than names. At St. Mary's he began to understand why these names had become landmarks in thought.

Out of the confusion of conflicting beliefs Socrates had drawn one fine spark of light, passed it to Plato, and in the hands of Plato the spark flamed into a torch. After Plato came his greatest pupil, Aristotle, and in the hands of Aristotle the torch became a towering flame that lit the centuries. From the ceaseless questionings of Socrates had come the central theme of Plato, the ideal existence that stood somewhere off in eternity and mirrored its existence in the life around him. With Aristotle the ideal existence did not come first, but life about him came first. Out of his studies of that life he extracted his own ideas and ideals. He took Plato out of the clouds and put the feet of philosophy on solid earth.

After them had come the revelations of Christ, the packed wisdom of the New Testament. It was exciting to see Augustine taking the philosophy of Plato, welding it to the teachings of Christ, to form the Augustinian philosophy. Then came the other Platonists, till it seemed that Aristotle would disappear in the drift of centuries. But that did not happen. Out of the East came a small book, *A Guide for the Perplexed,* a thin volume of observations by a profound Jewish thinker, a book that wedded the philosophy of Aristotle to the Talmudic Judaism— and Aristotle was back in the West. After this learned Jew, Moses Ben Maimon Ben Joseph, came Aquinas, and the immensity of the *Summa Theologica* and the *Summa Contra Gentiles,* and here was the perfect blend of Christian wisdom with Aristotelianism.

Was it ancient, or medieval? Yes, as medieval as

Chaucer or Chartres. Throw them out and you have left a gaping hole, not in the Middle Ages, but in modern thought. It was for John both a revelation and a growth. The knowledge was far beyond anything touched on while he was at Mount Calvary, and from the knowledge came the tools of knowledge, a clear mind, the logical eye that cuts away trimmings and gets to essentials. He found himself breaking down arguments into curt syllogisms, cutting away always, seeing the end of the arguments in their beginnings. His own thinking, speaking, writing, became more concise, more powerful. From the writings of the immortal thinkers his own mind extracted the kernal of their thought, till he had reached the maturity of thinking required for his course in Theology, the course where man seeks to look at God mirrored in His own revelation.

At the end of his second year the Professor of Philosophy at Mt. St. Mary's presented Noll with a complete set of St. Thomas' *Summa Philosophica*—as his best student.

It was in Theology that John found his real element. It was a very mysterious element, to be sure, for Theology is essentially a very mysterious science. It is absurd to think that man can know God completely, for only the Mind of God can fully know the Being of God. But it is equally absurd to say the mind of man can know nothing of God. What God has created is a mirror in which His perfections can be seen and studied. What God has revealed directly can be added to this, and the total is a very formidable body of knowledge, so formidable that men have studied only one aspect for a life time and have not begun to exhaust the subject. John Noll's mind did not absorb all there was to know about God, but his mind did absorb a fair amount, and years

of further study made the total a powerful unit of knowledge.

Out of Theology came his great devotion to Apologetics. Unfortunately the word has taken on a connotation that suggests an apology, but there is nothing apologetic about Apologetics. It is the science of proving the logical position of the Catholic Church by the use of pure reason. It is by no means a gentle murmuring of apology in the ears of the doubter, but the roar of a lion that stands alone. And he found out early that the Catholic Church did stand alone. He could not meet ministers of other religions and agree that their religions were as good as his. His later success in convert-making would be due largely to the thesis he always expounded at the outset; namely, that there is an "essential" difference between Apostolic Christianity and *all* modern religions, between a religion which is a divine organism and one which is a mere organization founded for the pursuit of some religious objectives.

The growth from boyhood to manhood was swiftly drawing to its conclusion. John could see in his studies the seeds of his future difficulties, the unreasoned bigotry with which he was to be faced, the hurt honesty of good people who differed with him in matters of religion and who could not seem to see his point of view. Most of all he could see the difficulties that were to arise from Catholics who cut out one or another of the teachings of the Church as either unnecessary or inconvenient. By so doing they were attacking the very fundamentals of the Church, and by the same measure they were losing the very thing that made their Catholicity. He could help a man who had offended against one of God's laws and was sorry; it was difficult to help a man who denied the

existence or validity of the law against which he had transgressed.

In this new world of revelation time passed quickly. The studies were intense, interesting, vast, so vast that they seemed to tie the weeks in little bundles and rush them past. The classwork was not devoted to dry academic speculation, but to the solution of real problems that would confront the students in their priestly ministry.

Outside the seminary the United States was rising in wrath against Spain, preparatory to its declaration of war against that country. Inside the seminary the professors threw out topical questions to the students, illuminating their teaching by the application of principles to current events.

"Mr. Noll, do you remember Christ saying 'I have not come to bring peace, but the sword; I have come to spread fire on the earth'?"

"Yes, Father."

"Mr. Noll. A question. Does that text apply in the present case?"

Mr. Noll pondered this question. The answer was not entirely clear. It was difficult to see the facts behind the mountain of propaganda. It was easy to analyze Napoleon, or the wars of Julius Caesar—but what about Spain in 1898? What were the real facts? More important, did Jesus mean that particular text to be taken as a directive in Moral Theology? Or was the professor trying to trip him up?

The war came. The American fleet sailed into the Atlantic, some of the ships coming around the Cape, the last test of the true mariner, and with them Admiral Dewey set out to hunt down the Spanish fleet. His ships of steel were vastly superior to the wooden craft of the

Spaniards, and hence a short battle in Manila Bay ended that war. A young soldier gathered his men about him, taught them the elements of cavalry technique, and the name of Teddy Roosevelt was whispered among the knowing. He had called his men together and they had vowed to drive the Spaniard out of the western world as well as the eastern. (This had much to do with the prejudiced state of opinion which our countrymen have since borne against Spain.)

Before the altar, in Passion Week of that same year, John Noll received the first of the Major Orders, the Subdiaconate; with it he made the traditional vow, solemnly pledging himself to a life of perpetual purity, renouncing the right ever to have a family. For him there would be no posterity. His life would be one of communion with God alone, a life of spiritual union with Christ his Savior. He would give himself to the family of mankind while renouncing his right to his own. He would have no physical paternity, no children that would be of his own flesh and blood. But the divine irony of it all—he would always be called Father!

"If you receive this order, you will no longer be permitted to withdraw from your purpose." It was Archbishop Elder. "Again and again you should consider the burden you freely seek this day. Thus far you are free and able to return at your pleasure to secular pursuits."

There were years of thought behind him now. There was no question in his mind. He knelt before the altar and prayed, and was certain.

"In the name of the Lord, step forward."

Then the prostration on the floor of the sanctuary, the imposition of the Bishop's hand, and with it the Subdiaconate. It was a renunciation, and an acceptance of an obligation, for with the order came the duty to

recite the Divine Office every day of his life, a recitation that would set apart one hour every day for communion with God through the recitation of the prayers and psalms chosen by the Church for each day of the year. It was an obligation he chose that bound him under the strictest of all penalties—that of mortal sin. To miss this recitation, except in cases of moral impossibility, would mean a deliberate shirking of his obligation toward God, a cold and clear break with the Christ he had chosen to serve. It was to be for him his second spiritual arm, coming only behind the center of his life, the Mass. In reciting the Office he would become a part of the largest commune of prayer in the world, for daily throughout the world every other priest—350,000 of them —would join him in the recitation of that same Office.

For John, now a subdeacon, the Diaconate followed on the very next day, and with the reception of this order came the immediate preparation for the priesthood and his first Mass.

4.

John Noll was twenty-three years old. By long custom the age of ordination to the priesthood was twenty-four. But in his case an exception was made. There was a clear need for as many young priests in the diocese as possible, and there was no doubt in the minds of his superiors that he was well suited for the priestly ministry. It was arranged, therefore, that the date for his ordination should be set for June 24, 1898. But in the midst of his preparations came word that the date had been moved back, this time to June 4, the Saturday before Trinity Sunday.

The new date was requested by the rector of the Fort Wayne Cathedral, Father Joseph Brammer. A convert from Lutheranism, Father Brammer had for years

been watching this boy, the first seminarian from the parish, as he prepared for the priesthood. Now the rector had become sick, so sick that he felt he would not live to see June 24, and it was his great desire to see John's ordination and be present at his first Solemn Mass. It was a final wish that could not be ignored.

Before the ceremony came a retreat, days of solitude when he searched deeper into his soul than he had ever looked before. After the retreat he went to Fort Wayne from Cincinnati, a trip that flowed past his mind as though it were only a step. Time seemed to have come to a halt. He slept fitfully, and in the June morning light knelt before the altar. Over his shoulders was his amice, the helmet of his salvation. He wore the alb of innocence girt with the cincture of chastity, the maniple of sorrow across his arm, and about his neck the stole of immortality. Over his left arm he carried a folded chasuble, the symbol of charity, and in his right hand a burning candle.

Before him sat Bishop Rademacher. The Archdeacon addressed the Bishop:

"Right Reverend Father, our Holy Mother, the Catholic Church, asks you to ordain this deacon here present to the office of the priesthood."

"Do you know that he is worthy?"

"As far as human frailty permits, I know, and I testify that he is worthy of the burden of this office."

The Bishop looked down at the young man before him. ". . . The office of the priest is to offer sacrifice, to bless, to govern, to preach, and to baptize . . . Therefore, dearly beloved son, chosen by our brethren to be our helper in the ministry, let your entire life be one of inviolable purity and holiness. Realize what you are doing. Imitate what you administer. . . "

Above them the choir began the Litany of the Saints while John prostrated himself before the altar. The last Kyrie sounded and a light touch on the shoulder brought John to his feet. He walked to the Bishop and knelt before him. The Bishop's hands bore down firmly on his head, then—

"We beseech Thee, Almighty Father, invest this Thy servant with the dignity of the priesthood . . ."

The Bishop raised his eyes. *Veni, Creator Spiritus.* Over the church rolled the chorus from the choir, the invocation of the Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost, upon the new priest kneeling at the altar. The Bishop took the priest's hands into his own, anointing them with holy oil: "Vouchsafe, O Lord to consecrate and sanctify these hands by this our unction and our blessing, that whatsoever they shall bless may be blessed, and whatsoever they shall consecrate be consecrated and sanctified, in the name of Our Lord, Jesus Christ." He put into the young priest's hands the chalice with wine and the paten with a host: "Receive the power to offer sacrifice to God and to celebrate Mass for the living as well as for the dead, in the name of the Lord."

They rose together. John went to his place, and celebration of the Mass of Ordination was recited by both together. After the Communion the priest came forward again and knelt while the Bishop rested his hands on the head bowed before him:

"Receive the Holy Ghost; whose sins thou shalt forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins thou shalt retain, they are retained."

The Bishop took both the priest's hands into his own once again: "Dost thou promise reverence and obedience to me and my successors?"

"I promise."

"The peace of the Lord be always with thee." The Bishop bent and kissed his cheeks.

In the sanctuary Father Brammer rose slowly from his prie-dieu. He was very tired, but very happy. He held Father Noll's hands in his own for a few moments and looking into his eyes, asked his blessing.

"I am very happy, Father. You will be a fine priest."

He turned and walked slowly from the altar. His feet were heavy. It would be good to rest them now after the long ceremony. An hour or two in bed would give him some strength again. It was such a long walk to his room . . .

He was in the sanctuary at Father Noll's first Mass on June 5, but then returned to his bed from which he did not rise again. For two weeks he lay there while the June heat ate into his strength, sapping the last drops of vitality from his weary bones. He died on the twentieth of June.

Father Noll's first Mass was celebrated on Trinity Sunday in Fort Wayne's Cathedral, where he had been baptized, confirmed and ordained. The bells of the Cathedral began their joyful pealing, and the organ thundered its prelude as the procession moved slowly down the aisle. Two little girls led, dressed in white with bridal veils. Behind them came the priestly guests, ranged according to age and dignity, then the preacher of the day, Father Joseph Kroll. After him came the acolytes with candles and snowy surplices, the archpriest in his flowing gold cope, the deacon and subdeacon, and last of all the celebrant, Father John Francis Noll, looking very slim and boyish beneath the weight of the vestments.

The choir slowly began their chant, the Introit, "Blessed be the holy and undivided Trinity . . ." And

so the Mass started and moved on its unhurried way in solemn ceremonial, the intricate counterpoint of the music weaving an obbligato in treble and bass from the choir, the silver censer sending forth its breath of fragrant incense to purify the altar, the offering, and the ministers.

". . . Who the day before He suffered, took bread into His holy and venerable hands, and with His eyes lifted up to heaven, unto Thee, God, His Almighty Father, giving thanks to Thee, He blessed, broke, and gave to His disciples saying: Take and eat ye all of this . . ."

He bent over the altar, and looked down at the bread before him. *"For this is My Body."*

He genuflected before his God. Next he took the chalice: "In like manner, after He had supped, taking also this excellent chalice into His holy and venerable hands, and giving thanks to Thee, He blessed and gave it to His disciples saying: Take and drink ye all of this, *for this is the Chalice of My Blood, of the new and eternal testament: the mystery of faith, which shall be shed for you and for many unto the remission of sins.*"

Again the tempo of the Mass increased, the murmuring of the prayers after the Consecration, the chanting of the Pater Noster, the whispered prayers of Communion. The moment when he received Communion from his own hands. The brief thanksgiving afterwards, and the final blessing of the congregation, the Last Gospel. It was over. The procession moved off the altar, and Father Noll could realize for the first time the immense truth. He was a priest now, a priest forever, his soul sealed with an indelible mark that would set him apart for all eternity, a mark that would be his badge of honor as long as he kept his faith and love inviolate.

CHAPTER TWO

The Wall Of Ignorance

THE first days following a priest's ordination might well be called his honeymoon. People everywhere, and perhaps with reason, attribute special virtue to his Masses, so that he finds himself invited to a different altar each morning in convents, hospitals, chapels, each replete with an abundance of flowers he will not often see again. It was thus with Father Noll, but there was, in his case, a very short honeymoon indeed.

Seventy miles northwest of Fort Wayne, almost on the northern border of Indiana, the city of Elkhart was in need of a substitute priest. For several years the pastor of St. Vincent's Church had been in poor health, and lately his physician had ordered a complete rest. It was to this parish that Father Noll went on his first assignment.

Thursday following his ordination he entrained for Elkhart. He had no difficulty finding the church on Main Street, and he was delighted with the house south of the church, for this was obviously Father Boeckelmann's rectory. He rang the bell, and a moment later the door was opened by a smiling nun.

"Good afternoon, Sister, I'm Father Noll, the new priest."

She beamed at him and took his hand firmly in hers. "Oh, yes, Father, we're very happy to have you here. You know, we've all been expecting you. I'll show you where you live."

His eyebrow raised a bit:

"Isn't this the rectory?"

She was surprised for an instant.

"Why, no, Father. It used to be till the Sisters came here, then Father Henry gave us this house and he moved into the shacks."

"The shacks?"

"Well, that's what he calls them." She stepped out into the street. "Come around to the back of the church and I'll show you."

He followed her with an empty feeling deep in his stomach. At the very end of the church property were a series of ramshackle frame units, most of them little better than sheds. The wood had long lost all suggestion of paint, and through holes in the walls you could see a dim interior. One section seemed a bit better patched than the rest. They headed for it. This was his home.

"Does the rain come in, Sister?"

She smiled sweetly. "I really don't know, Father. But I do know that Father Henry is always coughing and sneezing. I suppose it is a little damp." Father Noll felt a bit wheezy looking at it.

"Oh, Father," the sweet smile was there again, and he braced himself. "Don't mind the hoboes. They won't do any harm."

He felt himself becoming pink above his collar.

"Good Lord, don't tell me hoboes sleep with me!"

"Oh no, Father, but when the trains from the East slow down here some of them drop off and they head for one of these apparently deserted sheds. They sort of think of this as a sleeping car along the way. I'm sure you'll be able to give them some little thing to eat. They never cause any trouble. Some of them even stay over for Mass. But they won't bother you."

"Are you sure I won't bother them?"

She shook her head firmly. "No, they're used to

priests. You just be nice to them and you won't bother them at all."

"I'll do my best, Sister. Anything else I should get ready for?—or may I go in and get washed?"

She thought for a moment. "Nothing else—but don't hesitate to call on us if there's anything we can do for you."

2.

That Saturday found him a little nervous as, for the first time, he entered the church for confessions. If the reader can remember his own first confession, he knows that although the Sister had briefed him on what would happen when the priest opened the slide, what he should say, how he should answer, he was still apprehensive.

The feeling of a priest hearing his first confession is somewhat akin to that. He has been to confession hundreds of times himself, but he has never been able to fathom what goes on between the priest and the man ahead or the woman behind him. Are they telling bigger sins or smaller? Do they say the same prayers? Are they getting the same penance? Indeed, are they getting absolution at all?

And so it is with the new priest. His instructors have prepared him for every contingency; he has memorized the formula for absolution; he knows that, if worst comes to worst, he can defer his penitent until later—and still . . .

Pope Leo XIII was still reigning at that time. It was before the day of Pius X and frequent Communion. The Easter Season had closed the previous Sunday, so it was with some little relief that the priest found very few penitents awaiting him in the pews.

But it was easy—incredibly easy. There were no insoluble cases. The Latin words came readily to his lips,

so that before the day was over he found himself wishing for more penitents as an outlet for his zeal.

The Masses next day went well. The pastor had left and the people were accustomed to two Masses—indeed, two were needed if the little church were to accommodate all of the 150 families in the parish.

Where there is such a necessity, of course, a priest may offer two Masses. He simply does not break his fast between times.

Again, the thought of the sermon was disturbing. He had not written it, hence there was nothing to memorize. But he had jotted three points for development. This was his first flesh-and-blood congregation and—well, one never knew . . .

But, as the event proved, there was little to fear. By the grace of Ordination he was a leader and a preacher. These were his people. They were friends, not critics, and they knew he was there to help them. So the sermon went fluently enough. At the second Mass, he even ventured to develop a few new thoughts suiting his remarks to conditions he had already observed during his few days in Elkhart.

After Mass, Father Noll set himself to counting the collection which had been dumped on his desk by the ushers. It did not take long. He found he had something just short of six dollars, most of it in pennies. In fact, the Sunday collection was known as the "penny collection" —although, to do the parishioners justice, they also contributed to a monthly collection and paid pew rent, usually in quarterly installments; then, too, they patronized and helped with card-parties and socials of every description.

Two o'clock was the time set for Baptisms so, Breviary in hand, the priest crossed the lot to his church.

Being strange in the parish, he hardly knew what to expect.

In due course, a Christening party put in its appearance, two sponsors with an infant swathed in petticoats from head to toe. He could have wished the ceremony had been a mite more tranquil, with plenty of silence for recollection, for meditation on the wonderful effects of the Sacrament. After all, he was about to give a new birth to the child; it would be carried home a child of God . . . His hands and lips would free it from original sin, would implant in its soul the Blessed Trinity, making it a child of God and a co-heir with Jesus Christ of life everlasting.

Things began quietly enough:

"John Andrew, what dost thou ask of the Church of God?

"Answer 'Faith' "—this, an aside to the sponsors.

"What?"

"I said, answer 'Faith.' "

"Oh."

"Well?—John Andrew, what does thou ask of the Church of God?"

"Faith."

"What does Faith bring thee to?

"Answer 'Life everlasting' "—another aside.

"What?"

"I said, answer 'Life everlasting.' "

"Oh."

"What doth Faith bring thee to?"

"Life everlasting."

The priest went through the prayers, exorcisms and blessings until he came to the administration of the salt. With his thumb and forefinger, he rubbed a pinch of it well into the infant's mouth. The child smacked its lips

judiciously for a second or two, and then it came to life, screaming and kicking itself into a tantrum.

The godmother cooed with embarrassment, jiggling the baby up and down in her arms as godmothers have done from the beginning, while the godfather stood by sheepish and helpless.

The baby had quieted down somewhat when Father Noll turned around from the oil-stock, his thumb glistening with the Oil of Catechumens.

"I have to anoint its chest and back," he murmured.

There was a delay while the good woman tugged at the neck of the child's dress until the priest began to be afraid that she might strangle it.

"I anoint thee with the oil of salvation . . ." the priest began, making the Sign of the Cross on its chest and signaling the woman to turn the child over.

". . . in Christ Jesus Our Lord," he continued, signing it between the shoulder-blades, "that thou mayest have life everlasting," he concluded. And he took a mental resolution that the second sermon of his priestly ministry would be on the Sacrament of Baptism, with a special footnote on what the well dressed baby wears to the font.

Finally, after the Creed he directed the sponsors to hold the baby over the font and, while he poured the water from a shell three times in the form of a cross—as best he could—he said,

"John Andrew, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Like so many of the tremendous things in the Catholic Religion, the great moment was passed almost before one could realize it. What had just been a pagan, alien to God, now lay a Christian, squalling in its godmother's

arms. Through the goodness of God, it now had a title to everlasting life.

The priest anointed the infant on the crown of its head with Holy Chrism; then, laying a piece of white linen on its head, he continued,

"Receive this white garment, which mayest thou carry without stain before the judgment seat of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, that thou mayest have life everlasting."

Next, he handed a lighted candle to the godfather, saying,

"Receive this burning light, and keep thy Baptism so as to be without blame: observe the commandments of God, that when Our Lord shall come to His nuptials, thou mayest meet Him together with all the saints in the heavenly court, and live for ever and ever. Amen."

The trio were halfway out of the church before he remembered to gather the data for the baptismal registry.

3.

THE days passed quickly. At first Father Noll spent most of his time straightening out the rectory in Elkhart according to his own peculiar design. When he was not busy at the rectory he was visiting some of the families, to make himself known to his people. They received him graciously. It was always a treat to have Father come for a brief visit. At night he found himself slightly fatigued from all his work, happy to get to bed early, knowing that mornings came too quickly, and with morning a long day of work without respite.

Thursday night he retired particularly early, very tired from his long walk through the parish. He was almost asleep when he became conscious of a furious clatter at his door.

"Just a minute," he called from the window. He glanced at the clock while he reached for a glass of water. He came to a shocked halt. It was actually one-thirty. He had been asleep for over three hours. He put on his dressing gown and a pair of slippers and padded his way to the front door.

"Father, the doctor says my wife is dying." It was an elderly farmer, distraught and unshaven.

"Oh . . . I'm very sorry . . . Is she conscious?"

"She was when I left, but there's no telling how she'll be by the time we get there."

"Is it far?"

"No, only about three miles out of town. But this here's an old plough horse, and it's a pretty rough road."

"All right. I'll be with you in a minute."

He was back shortly, muffled in his clothing, the Holy Oil clutched in his hand, the Blessed Sacrament over his heart. They jogged silently through the darkness, the old horse weary and reluctant to hurry, while Father Noll prayed silently that God would spare the woman till he arrived. The farmer was tense, white even in the dim light of the moon. He turned to the priest.

"My name's Lichtenberger." The priest nodded. They moved on in silence. After what seemed an interminable trip they turned into a lane and pulled to a halt before an old house.

A frail woman lay breathing lightly, her face white and peaceful, her eyes closed. The priest laid his hand upon her forehead. It was cold and moist. She did not move. He bent over and murmured to her.

"Clara . : . Clara Lichtenberger . . ." He spoke clearly, as if that would help break through the veil of unconsciousness . . . "Clara . . . I'm the priest . . . It's Father Noll. I've brought you Holy Communion."

There was no answer. Her breathing seemed to be more irregular now. He doubted that she would live through the night. He whispered the words of absolution over her, raising his hand in the sign of the cross. He prepared to give her Extreme Unction and the last blessing. There were two lighted candles at the bedside and a small crucifix.

"Cotton," he whispered to the husband.

"I don't think we have any . . .".

The priest pulled a clean linen handkerchief from his pocket, one of his ordination gifts. "We'll make this do."

He bent over her . . . "Graciously draw near at the invocation of Thy name, that, having freed Thy servant from sickness, and bestowed health upon her, Thou mayest raise her up by Thy right hand, strengthen her by Thy might, defend her by Thy power, and restore her to Thy Holy Church, with all desired prosperity." Carefully he anointed each of the five senses, praying God that He would forgive her in whatever way she had offended by each of those senses.

He whispered her name again, but she did not move. He read the prayers for the dying over her, then signed her with the sign of the cross again . . .

"I, by the power given to me by the Apostolic See, grant thee a plenary indulgence and remission of all thy sins. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

There was little else to be done now. He had given her the last blessing of the Church. She was in the hands of God. Her husband stood at the foot of the bed, his own face twisted in pain, his eyes bright with tears. He knelt with the priest, and together they recited the rosary. The doctor came in, and the other two left for the long journey back to the rectory.

"I'm mighty grateful to you, Father. Clara wanted the priest bad. She's a good woman. If she wakes up I'll tell her you were here."

"If she wakes up you come and tell me, and I'll bring her Holy Communion—any time, day or night. Don't forget."

The following Wednesday he found time in the afternoon to visit the Lichtenberger farm with a borrowed horse. He turned into the barnyard, and there was his farmer, whistling merrily as he proceeded about his afternoon chores. He stopped, then came running to Father Noll.

"I came to see about your wife. I thought—"

"Ain't no need, Father. That's her there on the porch, there, a-rocking away like she ain't never been sick in her life. You sure fixed her up that night. She picked up right fast and she got out of bed yesterday. Be as good as new in another week."

There she was, waving at him from the porch, her face still white, but smiling and rocking in her great chair.

He put away the thought of black vestments and then, when he returned that evening, he knelt in long prayer before the altar.

During the seven months Father Noll spent at Elkhart, there was not a single death among parishioners, but he was called to wait on a dying tramp at the County Poor House, located half way between Elkhart and Goshen.

The poor fellow was from Connecticut. He told the priest how he had been resting quietly in a boxcar near the Elkhart station when someone, perceiving him, had fired a shot into his chest. He was taken to the Poor House, reported as a Catholic, and now he had asked

for the priest. He later died from the effects of the bullet wound.

On another occasion one of these "men of the road" managed to break into the rectory after midnight and reached the bedroom of the mother of Father Noll's pastor, a good old woman who had passed her eighty-sixth birthday. The intruder, observing that Mrs. Boeckelman was awake, walked over to her, grabbed her by the neck and told her that if she kept quiet he would not disturb her, but that if she made any noise, he would choke her. The lady screamed nevertheless and the would-be robber ran from the house. Father Noll was aroused by this noise, of course, but too late to catch the burglar.

4.

The last of the sacraments he was to administer as a priest, Matrimony, presented problems infinitely more complex than all the others combined. He realized early in his stay at Elkhart that there would be many mixed-marriages arising in the parish. There were too few Catholic families in the community for the boys and girls to find suitable wives and husbands among their own, so it was a foregone conclusion that many of his parishioners would marry those of another belief. There was a twofold possibility in such marriages: either the Church lost a member and the children born of the marriage, or the Church gained the children and possibly the non-Catholic party. It was Father Noll's business to see that the latter would be the result.

He found himself faced, from the very beginning, by a wall of blind prejudice. Most of the Protestant families in the town knew little of the Catholic Church, and looked upon the priest with a jaundiced eye. They had only slight contact with him, knew nothing about him

personally, knew only vague suggestions of weird happenings in the priesthood, of the strange Latin mumbo-jumbo whispered in church. They were, in general, average people, and their relations with him were by no means dictated by viciousness, but only by a lack of any real knowledge.

And this ignorance was not confined to the Protestants alone. His own parishioners astounded him occasionally with their own grotesque notions about the Faith. They did not help very much when he spoke to non-Catholics about the Church, then found later that a well-meaning parishioner in later conversation had, in his ignorance, contradicted much that he had said to the non-Catholic. The realization grew on him that his first big task was to instruct his own laity before he began to worry about those outside the Church.

He had a rather trying time one evening with one of the Protestant boys from the neighborhood who was about to marry a Catholic girl. He had invited both of them to his office, and on the following night the boy came back alone. He entered, watching the priest with suspicious eyes. Their conversation became aimless, for the boy was obviously not paying attention to what the priest was saying.

"Frank, what's the matter? What's worrying you?"

"Nothing at all . . . nothing really, except . . ."

"Yes?"

"Well . . . I was just wondering . . . Why can't you fellows get married like everyone else?"

"Oh," Father Noll was relieved. "Well, Frank, we offer up our right to family life as a sacrifice to Christ. You know He never married."

The boy was puzzled. "Yeah, but I heard stories about priests and nuns. I mean, I'm not talking about you, but I heard stories from a fellow once about priests

putting girls in a convent for themselves. Fellow said that once in a lecture, and he was an ex-priest, so I guess he should know."

"Frank, did he say anything else?"

"Yes. He told us how you priests are trying to get control of the country and give it to the Pope. He says you keep guns and ammunition in the cellar. And he said you practiced celibacy."

"Celibacy?"

"Yeah, celibacy."

"Do you know what that is, Frank?"

The boy looked sheepish. "No, I thought I heard them all, but that's a new one on me."

The priest drew a deep breath. "We do practice celibacy, Frank. That means we swear never to have any sex pleasure as long as we live. It is a promise to give up sex. It's one of the big things we sacrifice to become priests. We don't have any family, Frank, such as you are going to have. I suppose that's how we really have the whole world for our family."

The boy was quiet.

"Do I look weird, Frank?"

He looked at the priest. "No, Father, I think you're a pretty regular guy."

The priest smiled. "We all are, I guess. Come back again and let me know if you have any more questions. I'll answer them."

They rose and shook hands, and Father Noll walked with him to the door of the rectory. He let the boy out, and watched him walk around the church. Then he went back to his office and sat for a long time at his desk. It was incredible that medieval tales of monkish horror should have persisted until this present time, yet here in the middle of the United States were the same old tales told by the same old dupes.

He knew how much of an ex-priest the man had been. There was a fat living for any liar who wished to pawn himself off as an ex-priest, or ex-nun, and who would regale an audience with tales of violence, of lust among priests and nuns. And there was little being done about it in the neighborhood, for there were not enough priests to fight them on their own grounds, to expose them as frauds and liars. He looked down at the books on his desk. If only he could take the knowledge they contained and bring it to his own people, to people all across the nation, then they would have a body of truth near at hand for ready reference whenever any question arose. They would not have to rely on faulty memories when they were confronted by questions or statements that were surely erroneous.

"It isn't just marriage they're ignorant about," he told himself. "It's everything, all the sacraments, all the historical truths of the Church . . . And I can't pack enough into my Sunday sermons to give them all they need. I've got to find another way."

He toyed with a pencil, scribbling on the piece of paper before him. He began to print a few words . . . A Message from your Pastor . . . No . . . he could not send each one a letter, or post one on the bulletin board. He did not have the time . . . that was the big thing. He would have to make time. He would have to do something . . . and soon.

CHAPTER THREE

The Young Pastor

WITH the young priest's acceptance into the parish life as an integral part of the community, the need for spreading a knowledge of the work and spirit of the Catholic Church became even more obvious. At first it was possible to explain away any misunderstanding that might arise between himself and the non-Catholic elements in the community on the grounds of their natural reaction to a stranger in the community. Even a priest had to learn to fit. But when he had become an accepted citizen, that explanation was no longer valid, yet often enough he still found that wall staring him in the face.

During his seminary days, there had been times when he had felt baffled—all but frustrated. Everything was so clear to him: the divine foundation of one Church with its charter from Christ, the breakup in the sixteenth century, the organization of wildcat groups in hundreds, their tendency toward the centrifuge that kept wrecking them, while the historic Church went her way serenely, growing ever bigger; succession of orders; the Eucharist, as Sacrifice and Sacrament—it was there for all to see, a matter of history, a matter of logic. He could not see why Catholicism did not sweep the country. How could any intelligent person who had studied religion be anything but a Catholic?

In class each day the syllogisms used to march back and forth across the rostrum, sweeping everything before them. The professor would set up objections for the students, any one of whom when called on could easily

push them over through the application of general principles.

Only in the ministry did Father Noll find the answer. It was not in any sense due to the inertia of the clergy that America remained non-Catholic, if not anti-Catholic. It was owing to ignorance of the Catholic Church, plus a certain measure of inherited prejudice, plus an immorality that feared condemnation by the lofty standards of Christ, plus—inexplicably—an element of bigotry deliberately fostered by anti-Catholic sources through every manner of lie and fraud.

It came as something of a shock to him once when he entered a store, early in his ministry, to be greeted by the proprietor as "Mr. Noll."

He politely called the man's attention to a lack of courtesy, saying:

"Apart from religion, I'm a professional man. I've had four years of college with three years of graduate work—as much, if not more, than any doctor or lawyer in this town. You wouldn't think of addressing a judge or a physician without his proper title, would you?" But it depressed him, just the same, to think that such a fundamental courtesy would have to be pointed out.

Then there was the time Anne eloped. She had been one of his Sodality members, always ready to help with the annual lawn fete, there with her mop and bucket whenever he called for volunteers to scrub the church—a monthly communicant. Yet he hadn't known of her wedding until he saw in the local paper that she had attempted marriage in some nearby parsonage.

Why? How could one explain such mysteries?

The objections set before the class by his seminary professor had been straw men. It is true that if you take a heresy and consider it *in vacuo,* apart from considera-

tions of personality, family tradition, passion, and prejudice, it just floats away of its own inanition. But take a straw man and vest it in flesh and blood, give it parents and children, place it in a locale inhabited by thousands of other such beings, and you have something formidable —something that not even the arm of the Almighty can budge, granted He is to respect our free will.

While Father Noll entertained that wholesome dread of "mixed" marriages proper to Catholics, he could see that at times, especially in the Indiana of his day, they were a necessary evil. To reduce misunderstanding as far as possible, he always made it a point to instruct the non-Catholic party in Catholic doctrine just as far as he could before the marriage.

In one such instance he was confronted by the type of Christian that professes to follow nothing beyond the letter of the New Testament.

"You believe in God, I take it," the priest began.

"Of course," came the answer.

"Why?"

Father Noll rocked back and let the man flounder for a minute or two before coming to his relief with a few of the proofs from Natural Theology.

"Do you believe in the Trinity?" he began again.

"Yes, I do."

"Why? I don't find it in my Bible . . ."

"That's because you're using the Catholic Bible."

"Here—if that's the case." The priest pulled open a drawer of his desk and lifted out a handsome calf-bound Bible. "Here's the Authorized Version—the Protestant Bible, as it's called. See if you can find the Trinity mentioned in here."

"Well—I wouldn't know exactly where to look . . ."

"Try the index at the back," said Father Noll helpfully.

But there was no entry of the word "Trinity."

The man was bewildered.

"I'll tell you why you believe in the Trinity: because the New Testament often speaks of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—three Persons in One God. That's why you believe in the Trinity."

"Then it *is* in the Bible!"

"Certainly—by equivalence . . . just as every one of our Catholic dogmas can be found there, either by equivalence or inference.

"Have you been baptized?"

"Yes, as a child."

"And have you forgiveness of sins in your church?"

The man's jaw tightened ever so slightly.—"No, we don't believe in that."

"But you must, if you've been baptized. The removal of sin is the very purpose of baptism, and the removal of other sins is the purpose of another Sacrament."

And so it went with one item of the Catholic Creed after another. Despite his ultimate confusion, despite the fact that Father Noll had easily and completely stultified his every prejudice, the man refused to consider entering the Catholic Faith. Logic could not budge him.

It was not an isolated incident. It was a fight he would frequently face. He knew that these were good people, but he also knew that they would never see the Catholic Church as anything but a twisted maze of superstitions till a way could be found to bring some of the light from the interior of the Church into the outer world.

These were the thoughts running through the back of Father Noll's mind as he read his Office and made his thanksgiving after Mass. He used to say his rosary tramping up and down the aisles of his church.

Wherever he was, he was thinking . . . thinking . . . thinking . . .

No one had yet dreamed of the radio. There was no Catholic Hour, no Hour of Faith, no Family Rosary Program. The Pamphlet Apostolate was still undeveloped. A priest had nothing in the way of concise literature to hand an inquirer in answer to some particular objection. The only manual available for convert instruction was, if not the bone-dry Baltimore Catechism, then Cardinal Gibbons' man-sized *Faith of our Fathers* —a formidable work written for a fairly literate reading circle.

The diocesan press was still largely unorganized, and even where it existed, in the larger centers such as New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Chicago, etc., its only interest was the service of the local Catholic populace. The National Catholic Welfare Conference with its world-wide news coverage was still a thing of the future, so that the average Catholic paper of 1900, handed to a non-Catholic, would have appeared as provincial and as one-sided as a small town weekly of our own time.

These were the problems haunting Father Noll as he turned from one of his parish duties to another. There must be some way of getting the truth across to his good neighbors. There must be some means of liaison, and he was determined to find it.

2.

THE Fort Wayne clergy retreat of 1898 was held at Notre Dame University early in September, the week of the First Friday. Since Father Noll had already made his retreat in preparation for Ordination, the Bishop excused him, directing him instead to look after the Cathedral for that week.

Except for the chaplain of St. Joseph's Hospital, Father Noll was the only priest in several counties and it was a heavy responsibility. Sick calls came in from Decatur, Hessen Cassel, New Haven, Monroeville, Arcola and Wabash, besides the city of Fort Wayne. It would have been hard enough even with a car, but as it was, he had to travel either by horse and buggy or by train.

The day before the First Friday, Father Eisenring, C.PP.S., came over from the hospital to help with confessions. They were the only two priests on duty in the whole city, and people came trooping in from every direction. Starting at two, they heard without stopping until five-thirty when they went out for supper. At six-thirty they were back until midnight when the church was empty and they were exhausted.

Hearing confessions is far more trying than the layman imagines. The priest must be constantly on the alert, in a state of concentration: it is his duty to see that the penitent tells the number and species of his mortal sins. He must make sure that he is sorry. He must correct and advise him. Where there are no mortal sins, he must elicit the confession of venial sins or, if necessary, of past sins, so that his absolution will take effect.

There are habitual sinners and backsliders; half-hearted and lukewarm pentients; penitents who confess too loud and those who can barely be heard; penitents who are hard of hearing; penitents with exasperating mannerisms; penitents with bad breath, those who literally do not understand English, who do not know the Act of Contrition. And just when your nerves are almost on edge and the sweat is trickling down your chest and onto your stomach, you will get a penitent who has not confessed in ten or twenty years—which means that you

must examine his conscience and practically make his confession for him.

A stretch of nine hours "in the box"—the bare thought of it—would give pause to any priest.

But Father Noll was hardly back in the rectory that night when word came that a certain Mrs. Coffee lay dying in Wabash, forty-five miles away. He changed to street clothes, picked up his Ritual, stole, and oil-stock, and headed for the railroad station.

The dying woman's son met the train, but when the priest arrived at her home, he found that the local pastor had given her all the Sacraments before leaving for retreat.

"I just thought there might be some rite of the Church I hadn't received yet," she said.

She was in a critical condition, so he decided to give her Holy Viaticum again. Getting the key to the church —a mile away—from the pastor's housekeeper, he stepped inside the little frame building, but he found that there was no sanctuary light burning. And when he opened the tabernacle, he found it empty. The pastor had consumed the Blessed Sacrament before leaving his parish.

It was now three in the morning. There was no train to Fort Wayne until five. Still, he could be back for the eight o'clock Mass to give Communion to the hundreds of people he and Father Eisenring had absolved the day before.

It was a long and grinding fast: nothing to eat since five-thirty supper and nothing to drink since midnight. He could have broken his fast, of course, and just given Communion at eight o'clock, but he himself wanted to receive and he did not want to deprive the congregation of Mass just to suit his own convenience.

It seemed as though everything was to happen that week. Father Noll spent seven months in Elkhart without encountering a single death. But one day while he was filling in at the Cathedral, he was called to the parlor to interview a man and a woman. The woman's husband had just died suddenly. She was not a Catholic herself, but she wanted to do the right thing and she was not sure that her husband had made his Easter Duty. If that were a certainty—that the man had failed to make his Easter Duty—then he must be refused Christian burial.

In this instance, the man with the woman told Father Noll that her deceased husband was well acquainted with Bishop Rademacher. The priest asked them to wait while he put through a long-distance call to the Bishop at Notre Dame.

"I haven't had any contact with the man for several years," the Bishop said, "but as I remember him some years back, he was a good enough Catholic. Give him the benefit of the doubt. Let him have Christian burial."

Greatly relieved, the party left, but the man accompanying the widow must have had a guilty conscience. After an hour or so, he came back alone to see Father Noll.

"I should have told you this, Father," he began, fumbling his hat. "That woman with me isn't the only widow Mr. Schlager is leaving."

"No?"

"No—you see, she's his second wife."

"And is the first wife still living?"

"Yes. He got a divorce from her about a year ago and married this woman before a squire."

"That's too bad," said Father Noll. "And you're sure he didn't have the priest when he died?"

"Positive, Father."

"Well, then, I guess the funeral's off. All we can do is pray for the poor man."

Late that afternoon a telegram arrived from a nun in Detroit:

HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED OF FATHER'S DEATH. DID HE HAVE LAST SACRAMENTS? ANXIOUS TO KNOW.

It was the most difficult question he had answered in his life.

3.

FATHER Noll found his first Christmas in the ministry far different from any he had previously experienced. He spent the morning of the 24th helping to decorate the church, trimming the altars and festooning the windows and gables with evergreen. The crib had to be put up over on the Epistle side of the church. There were big spruce trees to be stood in place, then the stable had to be put up, and the statuettes arranged just so on the cotton wadding that represented the snow.

Then the confessions—a swarm of them—almost as bad as that day at the Cathedral, except that now he was not hearing only the devout. Christmas is a feast that brings out the "horse-thieves"—people who go to the Sacraments only once or twice a year. The line is so long that the priest cannot give them the full treatment that they deserve. He knows he should and the books say he should, even though it meant taking twenty minutes to each case, but what can one do in the face of scores of people outside patiently waiting, saying their beads and communing with the Blessed Sacrament?

But Father Noll did the best he could, rocking from one side to the other all afternoon and evening, with a kind word and a blessing for everyone who presented himself.

The priest offered his first Mass at five. After he had finished his third Mass, he realized that he was tired. He rested for an hour or so and then took up his Breviary. Christmas Day. The house was quiet. There was nothing to break the stillness—no doorbell, no telephone. He closed the book on his thumb and reflected for a moment. What was it? What was lacking?

Then it came to him. Christmas is a day for the children and there are no children in a rectory. It's a home-day. That's why the house was so quiet. All the parishioners were spending the day at home with their families. And he was a priest. He had no home—no family. He was lonesome.

His eyes lingered momentarily on the crucifix that hung over his bed, and then he went on with his Psalms.

4.

A FEW weeks later Bishop Rademacher told Father Noll to report for duty at St. Bridget's Church in Logansport. The pastor there had just passed through a siege of typhoid fever and Father Noll was to take his place for a time.

He was finding out that his life in one way resembled that of an Army officer. Both must be prepared to pack up and accept a new assignment on short notice. He must learn to "travel light." He could not accumulate too much in the way of personal effects, for that would make the business of transfer too cumbersome. Besides, in most places, an assistant pastor has only one room as parlor, study, and bedroom. He would not have much space for books, periodicals, and other personalia.

It was on January 10 that he went to Logansport. where he stayed until Washington's Birthday. For a whole month, the thermometer registered temperatures

below zero. The weather was so severe that hardly a day passed when he was not called out to anoint someone suffering from pneumonia.

His rectory was heated by natural gas, but because of the severe cold snap and the heavier drain on the supply, hardly anyone had enough heat to warm his house. His bedroom had neither heat nor running water. Every night, the housekeeper would fill a pitcher with water so that he would be able to wash next morning. But that first night of the cold spell was enough to freeze the water solid. The next night, the priest emptied the water into the bowl and set it on top of the gas stove—and still it froze. A thermometer inside his bedroom registered seven degrees below zero.

A Mr. Conroy, an octogenarian, consoled Father Noll by reminding him that the cold weather surely would not last beyond St. Patrick's Day.

Although he was only six weeks in Logansport, one incident made a lasting impression on him—a sick call to the Long Cliff institution for the Insane. The patient had been there twenty-three years and was now on her deathbed. When the priest presented himself, a nurse told him that the woman had not had a lucid interval since she had been admitted to the asylum.

But as the nurse got her ready to receive Extreme Unction, Father Noll noticed the patient joining her hands and moving her lips in prayer, so he asked the nurse to leave so that he could hear the woman's confession. The patient was sane for the moment. The priest was able to get her confession and she received the Sacraments as devoutly as though she had never been sick. He called the nurse back into the room while he gave the patient Holy Viaticum and anointed her. When he turned toward the patient with the Sacred Host, she

was especially reverent and, without being asked, extended her tongue to receive.

The nurse was astonished. It was the first "food" the patient had been willing to accept in several days.

Father Noll's patient was obviously granted a great favor. Someone was praying hard for her salvation. Or, as he himself says, "It was simply a case of the Lord having been good enough to restore to perfect consciousness one who, during her earlier life, had loved Him and deserved to die in His loving embrace."

CHAPTER FOUR

Toward The "Other Sheep"

DURING that first year of his ministry, Father Noll must often have been tempted to think of himself as something of a vagrant: first Elkhart; then Logansport; and now—on Washington's Birthday, 1899—still less than nine months ordained, he found himself appointed to his first pastorate, St. Patrick's Church, Ligonier, with Kendallville and Millersburg as missions.

It was not much of an assignment as far as temporalities go. There were fewer than fifty families in his entire territory of thirty miles square. He arrived in the bitter cold to find a house that was practically impossible to heat, and an ancient church whose wallpaper dangled at odd intervals from walls and ceiling.

The church was equipped with two soft-coal stoves. Their chimneys arched and met at the center of the ceiling, but since the outlet was hardly big enough to handle the smoke from even one stove, the results can well be imagined. When Father Noll turned around to introduce himself to his people, there was such a thick haze that he could hardly see them. A storm of coughing, though, assured him that they were gathered, someplace in the near vicinity, around the altar.

Nevertheless, it was his own parish. It was his personal responsibility to provide Mass for his parishioners, to see that no one died without the Sacraments, to hear confessions on Saturdays and the eves of feast days, and to see that the sick were properly looked after, spiritually and physically. He was to pay the bills, keep the building clean and warm, instruct converts.

But he could never lose sight of the fact that he

was responsible as well, actually and before God, for every soul within the limits of his parish—heretic, infidel, and schismatic, as well as faithful. The whole town should be worshipping under his roof, seeking absolution and the Bread of Life at his hands. As he saw it, he alone was Christ's ambassador in the community.

As the days wore on, he threw himself into the work of consolidating his congregation. There was the inventory to be taken, a few of the most urgent repairs and improvements to be made, and then the census—this last, the most exhausting and consoling portion of his ministry. It involved a visitation of each family—most of them lived seven or eight miles from town—with a checkup on the spiritual status of each member, the solicitation of the most intimate data through questions put with prudent tact.

Then there was the spiritual harvest of all this fieldwork in the shape of private instructions for those who had been delayed in making their First Holy Communion, and for those who had asked to enter the Faith; the baptism of many a child big enough, by now, to blow out the candle for himself; the compilation of a sick list for periodical visitation; and the patching up of invalid marriages.

Coming from a family of nineteen children, he had acquired a large degree of self-reliance and had always been kept so busy that he could never find time for self-pity. It was just as well, because there were precious few comforts for the priest in Ligonier, Indiana, during the first years of this century. St. Patrick's Parish could never afford a housekeeper—not during Father Noll's incumbency, at least—so it was up to him to make his own bed, clean the house, and cook his own meals.

One expedient that he soon developed was a "boiled dinner"—useful in economizing dishes, pans, and time.

First he set a boiler on the stove, then he threw a few ears of corn into it, next a can of pork and beans; finally he carefully dropped a few eggs into the brew.

2.

THE young pastor lost no time in getting acquainted with the Protestants of his parish. He loved to talk religion and he was gifted with a persuasive manner that made him a formidable opponent in any controversy. He had the knack of winning his adversary's confidence, and then poking with the keen edge of his logic straight to the heart of the issue.

There was the time when his Seventh Day Adventist neighbor called on him. The man had no concept of reasonable discussion, as Father Noll very soon found out. He seemed impervious to logic. Even though he had been floored emphatically by proofs from Sacred Scripture, tradition, and common sense, cool and unperturbed, he would still parrot the tenets of his creed, based on one Old Law Scripture text and on confusing prophecies relating to the end of the world.

The priest soon brought this particular discussion to an abrupt close:

"Let's not argue any further," he said, "because I don't accept your rule and you don't accept mine. Let's suppose we were arguing over the length and width of this carpet on the floor. You'd hold it to be nine by twelve, and I, ten by thirteen. Our argument could be settled only by measuring it with a rule, and we wouldn't agree on the rule."

The Adventist withdrew, happily unaware of the fact that Father Noll had been appealing to a rule—the rule of elementary logic—accepted practically unanimously by the whole civilized world, accepted in fact by the Adventist himself in everything but the one depart-

ment that matters most—the procuring of everlasting happiness for himself and his family.

Just the same, Father Noll made it his business to pay a return call a few days later. It proved embarrassing to everyone concerned, for the priest had chosen the one night of the week when the Adventist turned over his parlor to his co-religionists for the holding of a prayer-meeting.

There were fifteen or twenty devout Adventists gathered in the parlor when the priest put in his appearance. But his host rose manfully to the occasion by introducing the Catholic clergyman and inviting him to lead them in prayer.

Not to be outdone in courtesy, Father Noll began reciting from memory a prayer to the Holy Family—Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. There were fervent Amens while he invoked the intercession of Our Lord, but when he passed on to the words in praise of Christ's mother and His foster-father, there were murmurs of resentment so audible that the priest excused himself immediately and left the little congregation to its own ways.

Another time, he was visited by a book-salesman, a retired or superannuated Methodist minister, out to supplement his meagre pension by selling books which he considered worthwhile.

On this occasion, he was peddling a ten-volume set called Lord's *Beacon Lights of History.* The priest's eye was caught by the title of one particular volume, "The Reformation," and he asked if he could see that volume before he committed himself one way or the other. The minister brought it to him a few days later with the remark that he believed the priest would find it "eminently fair" in its treatment of the Catholic Church.

Father Noll opened the book and read its very first sentence to the minister:

"'An indulgence is a license to sin for a remuneration.'"

"Now," he asked, "do you think that's a fair definition of even that one doctrine, which this historian apparently regards as the chief reason for Luther's revolt?"

"I don't know what you personally may teach on the subject of indulgences," the minister replied, "but I can assure you that the definition of an indulgence universally accepted by the non-Catholic world is precisely as Dr. Lord stated it in the sentence you just read. It's a license to sin for a price."

Father Noll smiled broadly.

"My dear sir," he said, "if the Catholic Church had ever taught any such rot, Luther and his followers would have been joined in revolt by Catholics everywhere, since it's self-evident that not even the Almighty God Himself can give anyone 'a license' to commit sin. Infinite holiness is bound to be unalterably opposed to sin. Why, an indulgence will not forgive even the least peccadillo, much less 'license' it!"

But it was a time when the nights were long and lonesome. It was before the radio and phonograph, before the invention of the automobile. A priest had long hours for study. And since Father Noll was interested in getting inside the non-Catholic mentality, he bought *Beacon Lights of History,* all ten volumes of it.

The next day, entrained for the funeral of a Kendallville parishioner, the priest encountered his salesman again and invited him to hear him preach at the obsequies. The aged minister accepted the invitation and in his sermon Father Noll developed Catholic teaching on purgatory and prayers for the dead, thereby setting the Protestant divine right on two other points of Catholic doctrine.

One night during his first year in Ligonier, the pastor received a telegram from Frank Weber in Kendallville: *Come at once. Father is dying.* Frank was organist, choir-director, and general factotum of the Kendallville congregation.

The next train left Ligonier at midnight with the priest on board. There was no taxi-cab available, so he had to walk the mile from the station to the Weber home. Finding it dark, he rapped loudly at the door and aroused Frank from his bed. Father Noll showed the man his telegram.

"But it doesn't look as though any of you Webers are sick," he added.

"I think I can explain the whole thing," said Frank. "It was I who sent the wire all right, but the operator got it wrong. It's a fellow named 'Tartar' that's sick. And she made it 'Father.'"

"Who's Tartar, and where does he live?" the priest asked.

"He was born a Catholic, but I doubt if he's been to Mass in years," said Frank. "If you'll wait a minute, Father, I'll get some clothes on and take you over there."

The priest found the trip well worth his trouble. Tartar was a man who had been away from the Church for thirty years. Father Noll was able to get a confession out of him and gave him all the Sacraments before he died. That following week—moved, perhaps, by the priest's kindness toward her husband—Mrs. Tartar placed herself under instruction with her five children.

3.

THE longer Father Noll stayed in Ligonier, the more he became convinced that Ligonier should be attended from Kendallville, which was nineteen miles away.

He used to offer the early Mass at Ligonier on one Sunday and at Kendallville the next, the time of service being regulated by the schedule of the New York Central. All but four of his twenty-one families at Ligonier lived far out in the country and the only way they could get to church was by horse and buggy over mud roads, whereas at Kendallville, where his congregation was practically the same size, all but a few lived in the town.

The priest used to go over to Kendallville from Ligonier for confessions every second Saturday. Then he would sleep overnight in the sacristy, which was equipped with a bed and stove.

Father Noll now learned how he had come to be appointed to Ligonier. After having built a new house at Ligonier, his predecessor in the pastorate had come to feel the same way about the situation and had simply moved over to Kendallville, bag and baggage, installing himself for the time in the sacristy.

The people at Ligonier had resented this, and when a congregation turns against a pastor *en bloc*, as Ligonier had turned against its pastor, his influence is at an end, and all he can do is ask to be changed.

Father Noll profited by his predecessor's mistake. Instead of taking the matter up with his committeemen or trying to promote the idea from his pulpit, he bided his time for over a year. Then he sat down and wrote a letter to the Administrator of the Diocese, stating all the reasons favoring a change of residence. (Bishop Rademacher had died in January, 1900, and the Diocese was still vacant.)

Father Guendling, the Vicar General, merely copied the letter on the Bishop's stationery and sent it back, whereupon the pastor read it from the altar—a page or so ordering the transfer of residence for the good of souls. There was some little grumbling on the part of the con-

gregation, but, after all, what could they do about it? The supreme authority of the Diocese had spoken. There was no recourse.

Now he had to find a rectory in Kendallville—a house as near as possible to the church. He managed to locate a little place about half a block away, for which the owner was asking $100 a year. That does not sound like much, but when you consider that the total income contributed by the three parishes—Kendallville, Ligonier, and Millersburg—was less than $500 a year (even though the priest's allowance was $600 to cover his living, train-fare, and a housekeeper's salary), that $100 rent became quite an item!

Kendallville was supposed to raise $300, Ligonier $250, and Millersburg $50, but Father Noll felt in conscience that he simply could not take the whole of it. His missions were too poor. As it was, they had to depend on socials, bake sales, and parish suppers to raise that $100 rent, to pay for light and heat, and the modest furnishings of the little rectory.

During his three years at Kendallville, the only train he could take to Millersburg, twenty-eight miles distant, left at five in the morning. It arrived at six, leaving him with three hours on his hands before services. He would spend that time instructing two small children who lived about a mile out in the country. The walk was pleasant in good weather—and then at eight o'clock he would start back in time to hear confessions before Mass.

The acolyte in Millersburg was a man eighty-four years old who had "enjoyed" the singular privilege of burying four wives. Each wife was remembered with a Mass on her anniversary, but the old fellow insisted that the pastor be very precise in announcing the intention. The congregation must be told that "This Mass is for

the happy repose of John Lesch's fourth wife" or "first," whatever the case happened to be.

4.

IT was at Millersburg, too, that he had his first chance to get into the work he had looked forward to for so long, the work of bringing the truths of his Faith to the people outside the Church. He had complete authority to do what he wanted here, in his own parish, so he decided to open a public course of lectures on Catholicism. He had no idea how the idea would be received, but it was certainly worth the chance.

He went to the local newspaper and inserted an advertisement stating that a lecture on the Catholic Faith, open to Catholics and Protestants alike, would be delivered on Friday night at 7:30, in the Church of St. Henry.

He was on hand early. At 7:30 there were scarcely fifteen people in the church. He felt bad about it, but soon he could hear feet shuffling behind him, and he knew there were some others comnig. He caught his breath when he turned around. The entire church was filled to capacity, with some still coming, standing in the aisles along the wall. They had waited till the first ones broke the path, then nearly the whole village had come.

Although he had not intended to speak more than a half hour, he ended by talking an hour and a half. He realized that many of his listeners might never again step inside a Catholic church, and he had to get over to them at least the basic ideas of the Catholic Church. They listened attentively, rose quietly when he had finished, and left the church in small groups, talking over what he had said. It was altogether different from what they had expected. They had come, not so much because

of the magnetic personality of Father Noll—they had not even known him—but out of sheer boredom. There just was nothing else to do that Friday night; this was a way to pass the evening. But when they returned for later lectures, it was not out of boredom. They knew what they would find there.

When it was all over Father Noll sat in the vestry and breathed a deep sigh. It was difficult to know just how much good he had done in that one sermon, but at least they had listened to him. He certainly had done no harm. He rose to leave—when he noticed there were four people waiting for him, two wives with their husbands.

"Come in, please."

They came in, hesitant, but friendly.

"I'm afraid I don't know you people yet. I'll get around to meeting you all soon. I hope you enjoyed the talk."

They smiled. "Father, we're not Catholics."

"Well, I still hope you enjoyed it."

They fumbled with their words for another few moments. Finally one of the men gathered his courage. "Father, we've talked about your Church for a long time between ourselves. We did like what you said. It answered some of the questions we were asking . . . And Father . . . we'd all like to become Catholics, too. Would you mind?"

When they had gone, ready to come back for the course of instructions before they were received into the Church, he sat down again. In one small lecture he had helped God bring these four into the Catholic Church. There was a tremendous field of work before him now. If this could happen here, it could happen elsewhere. The tempo of his life was increasing, and the fields into

which he could move were just now opening before him.

The ministers of the few denominations represented at Millersburg all baptized by immersion. While instructing the two couples and their children Father Noll asked whether they had ever been baptized, and all four adults answered that they had, but one lady immediately interposed: "We do not believe in the Baptism of their church"—referring to the other couple. Father Noll asked just why the people of her church did not accept the Baptism of the couple belonging to the other church, and the lady answered: "They immerse backwards while we immerse frontwards."

Father Noll explained that in the Catholic Church —Latin Rite—we do not immerse at all, but we hold the method of immersion, properly performed, to be valid. "However," he said, "it is not necessary, and is not practical in relation to a great many people, such as persons who are dying in hospitals or are victims of accidents." The two couples readily accepted the priest's explanation, as they did in all other matters pertaining to the Church. They and their five children—nine in all— were baptized in a single ceremony.

CHAPTER FIVE

An Answer To Foul Play

ENCOURAGED by his success in Millersburg, Father Noll decided to open a series of lectures for the Protestants of Kendallville, to run indefinitely on Sunday nights. These were well attended. In fact, the pastor of the local "Church of Christ," together with his parish trustees, was there for the talk on Purgatory. On their way home afterwards, one of the men suggested to the preacher that he answer the priest.

The minister conceded that the Catholic position on purgatory was well nigh invulnerable. It was not a theme that could easily be refuted. However, since the priest had talked on the subject of Infallibility the previous Sunday—a lecture which the minister had *not* attended—he told his elders that he would deliver a rejoinder on that subject. He announced it through the Kendallville papers, and also on a blackboard in the Post Office, since almost everyone dropped in there at least once a day to pick up his mail. The subject of this talk was "The Locks and Keys to Heaven and Hell."

Father Noll ignored all this until finally the minister, galled by the capacity crowds of Protestants sitting in the Catholic church every Sunday evening, thrust himself on the priest by challenging him to a debate. He sent the challenge by a special messenger and then announced it in the paper. As his topic he posed the question, "Is the Church of Christ the True Church?"

In his reply the priest wrote:

"We Catholics believe that the Church of Christ is

the one true Church, but we claim that ours alone *is* that Church. Let me prove the Roman Catholic Church to be the original Christian Church," he continued, "and then you may attempt to prove that your denomination *called* 'The Church of Christ,' is that original Church."

The minister, acknowledging the receipt of this letter, went on to remark:

"You would be placing me on 'partisan' grounds, which is not fair"—whatever he meant by that. He also proposed that an admission fee be charged at the door to defray the expense of having stenographers take down the proceedings.

The priest promptly objected on the ground that people might come to view the whole thing as a crass money-making proposition.

The preacher chose to answer this in a letter to the editor:

"Let me tell Father Noll," he wrote, "that the Roman Catholic Church is the last institution on earth to give the people something for nothing. The fees of the confessional demonstrate the opposite, for here the priest gives nothing for something."

The editor was fair-minded enough to allow the priest plenty of space for a rebuttal of this witty improvisation. Father Noll waded in so forcefully, so effectively, that the ignorance of his opponent was held to scorn before the whole community with the result that before the week was out, the trustees of the "Church of Christ" had asked their pastor's resignation, and he was forced to leave the city.

2.

However, Father Noll was never the one to sidestep an argument where he thought there was a possibility of doing some good. For instance, for many years the

Methodist Church of Northern Indiana had been conducting a six-weeks course of lectures and assemblies at Island Park, Rome City—a town eight miles north of Kendallville. On one occasion persons unfriendly to the Catholic Church had booked a certain Reverend Mr. F. F. DeLong for a talk, which the priest knew would be directed against the Catholic Church. Despite an unsavoury reputation, Mr. DeLong held a Baptist pastorate in the vicinity and had been picking up extra money by delivering eloquent and fanciful tirades against "the Church of Rome." Father Noll happened to have a letter from Mr. DeLong's wife, accusing him of trying to force carbolic acid down her throat —so he decided to take in the gentleman's lecture.

With him at the time were the pastor of the Fort Wayne Cathedral, the superior of the St. Louis Province of the Jesuits, and a few other priests sojourning at the Kneipp Sanitarium nearby.

It was hard to calculate the purpose of the meeting except for the collection which would be taken up. Granted Rome were a wicked and iniquitous conspiracy against virtue, womanhood, patriotism, and everything holy, there seemed to be no point in exposing it before an audience of non-Romans. No one in the auditorium that night had any special love for the Catholic Church. No one had any Catholic convictions of which he might be disabused. If Mr. DeLong had been in earnest, he should have gathered around himself a group of Catholics and pleaded with them to desert their trough of sin. But this present congress—its only effect could be an increase of intolerance and black unreasoning hatred with, perhaps at its farthest extreme, arson or rioting.

The group was typical: the very righteous committee seated on the stage, solemn, already a little indignant at the outrages they were soon to hear discussed;

the audience, most of them good people with nothing else to do on a hot night, many of them a little self-conscious.

There was a bit of a stir when the party of priests filed in and ranged themselves in a row of seats toward the back, all of them conspicuous in their black broadcloth and backward collars. A few of the audience passed comments to their neighbors on the impudence of these priests who insisted on being present while their Church was under attack.

The entry did not escape the notice of the committee either—but with them it was more nervousness than indignation. They had been all set to try and condemn the Catholic Church *in absentia,* and now there was a Counsel for the Defense in the house.

Nevertheless, the chairman got to his feet and made his introduction, extolling the virtue, scholarship, experience, and complete reliability of the Reverend Mr. F. F. DeLong, who this night was bringing them a "message" of singular interest.

Mr. DeLong's talk was hardly theological or even philosophical in import. He did not discuss the merits of Private Judgment as against Authority in Religion, nor did he touch on the necessity—or lack of it—of a sacrificing priesthood. Instead, he launched forth on a harangue that accused Catholics, and particularly their priests and sisters, of everything from barratry to blasphemy. He covered his ground very thoroughly. Not one slander was passed over: the False Decretals, the Inquisition, Galileo, the immuring of nuns, and even Pius IX on Modernism. For his peroration he reserved a lot of lascivious charges involving alleged immoralities in monasteries and convents. It was good and juicy and by rights it should have left the audience flushed

and bright-eyed, ready to take up ball bats and seek out the nearest nest of "Romans."

Throughout the lecture, a few of the priests sat studying the ceiling in utter boredom. But Father Noll was on the edge of his seat the whole while, planning the strategy of a rebuttal; as soon as the minister had finished, he was on his feet with objections. He was a big man, big-boned, with a commanding presence and a voice that could fill the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City.

"Just a minute, sir," he called in his booming voice. "I know you won't object to a question or two on a point of information. May I ask, first of all, if you have ever been a Catholic—if your mother was a Catholic—or your father, and if not, could you give us the source of your information on the Catholic Church?"

The parson fingered his collar nervously.

"No," he replied. Then he cleared his throat. "Thank God, I have been spared any association with the Church of Rome either on my part or on the part of my parents. My information has been gleaned from standard reference works and from conversations with various well-informed sources."

"Mr. DeLong," the priest persisted, "you have just said that gross immorality is the general rule in our convents, and you allege that these things don't leak out because we priests are the only ones permitted inside a convent. That's a bare-faced lie, Mr. DeLong."

The parson flushed.

"Sir," he countered, "I can substantiate that assertion. I'll give you fifty dollars if you'll get me inside a certain convent I shall name in Fort Wayne."

At that, Father Quinlan jumped up.

"I happen to be a pastor in Fort Wayne. We'll take you up on that, Mr. DeLong. You name the convent and we'll see to it that you get a chance to inspect it from

attic to cellar. What's more, I'll pay your traveling expenses both ways. You turn that fifty dollars over to a referee—say—the chairman up there, and we'll see it through."

Mr. DeLong lost a great deal of his aplomb.

"Perhaps I was a little hasty," he conceded. "I'll not go anywhere with any of you gentlemen. But it isn't that I'm afraid I'll be proved wrong. My reason is Scriptural. Gambling is against the word of God, and I won't let any set of priests induce me to break God's Law.

"What's more," he went on defiantly, "I expect to have an ex-priest visiting me in a day or so, and we'll both give a lecture from the stage of the Opera House in LaGrange—the day after tomorrow at eight o'clock. You're all invited . . ."

Father Noll accepted the invitation, but he was disgusted to find that it was only the same thing all over again. "Father" Delaney painted a lurid picture of the indignities he had suffered as a priest, his remonstrations against the wickedness of his fellow-priests, and his final resignation from the ministry.

Father Noll had Delaney's record. He had never been a priest. He betrayed himself in almost every detail. But he had to be discredited before the audience. So again, at the end of the lecture, Father Noll took the floor:

"What diocese are you from, sir?"

"Chicago."

"Good enough. But now, my dear people," Father Noll said, addressing himself directly to the audience, "I'm a priest myself—pastor in Kendallville—and I happen to know that your lecturer has never in his life been a priest. Tonight he spoke much about Father Chiniquy. Now Chiniquy was a priest, but he was booted out of the ministry for misconduct. But Mr. Delaney—! Well, let

me ask him one single question and from his answer you will arrive at your own decision."

There were a few murmurs of assent.

"Tell us then, Mr. Delaney," he said, addressing the lecturer, "just what is an Ordo?"

The auditorium went dead silent as the people sat staring into Mr. Delaney's face.

Father Noll waited a full thirty seconds before he repeated his question.

"What is an Ordo, Mr. Delaney?"

Mr. DeLong rushed to his colleague's relief.

"That's not fair," he began. "Mr. Delaney has been out of the Catholic ministry for many years now. We can't expect him to remember these technical terms when he's no longer using them."

"Very well, Mr. Delaney," Father Noll's voice came booming out, completely ignoring DeLong, "I'll tell you what an Ordo is. It's the annotated calendar found in every sacristy and on the desk of every priest. We consult it each morning before saying Mass, and each day before we begin reading our Breviary. Remember?"

Turning to the audience, Father Noll said: "Now tomorrow night, it's my turn to talk. You've just spent the whole night listening to a falsifier—a pretended priest—telling you a lot of nonsense about the Catholic Church. I'm giving you a chance to hear a real priest, a Catholic, telling you the truth about his Church. I'll be on that very stage at this time tomorrow. If you're fair-minded you'll come. No collection will be taken up—the only thing that attracts DeLong and Delaney—and you'll all be free to ask as many questions as you like."

A footnote might be appended to this incident: The Chiniquy referred to by the Messrs. DeLong and Delaney invented the famous "Black Cloud" statement, ex-

pressing fear of the Catholic Church, and attributed it to President Lincoln, whose son Robert took the trouble to write Father Noll assuring him that his father had never made any such remark.

3.

CHRISTIAN Science was spreading rapidly while Father Noll was in Kendallville. What he could find on the subject only impressed him with the great suggestibility of human beings, and such cures as he found reported never seemed to concern themselves with diseases such as cancer or cataracts, but always with ailments that were purely functionary.

To verify this, he called on old Mrs. Scanlan at Ligonier, sick at the time with grippe.

"How do you feel?" he asked.

"Father, I have a terrible headache."

"I can cure that headache for you."

"I know you can, Father."

He asked her to fasten her eyes on the knob of the door of a coal stove near her bed. Then placing his hand on her forehead, he told her that her headache was going fast, that it was gone. She reflected only a second and then exclaimed, "It *is* gone, Father."

The net effect was none too good. Mrs. Scanlan began spreading the good news that there was a miracle-man in their midst.

However, as a double check, he tried it next day on a child, the twelve-year-old niece of his housekeeper. When he found her crying over a pain in the stomach that had developed after some violent exercise, he put her through much the same sort of routine as Mrs. Scanlan had undergone. As soon as he assured her that her pain had left, she went flying out to the kitchen with the news that Father Noll had "cured" her. To test his

"science," Father Noll asked her to burn her finger on the stove, assuring her that he could stop the pain in a minute. She reluctantly complied, and the priest's suggestions did the trick.

This led the young pastor to conclude that, as he himself now says, "Many people, physically and organically sound, have both imaginary illnesses and common non-organic pains. The physician can cure them with colored water if they have implicit faith in him and in his medicine. Today advantage is taken of such people by many ministers of the gospel who claim to be 'faith healers.' They have a large following and make a handsome living on the gullibility of those who trust them. They are not 'faith' curists, but the relief their patrons receive is due almost entirely to the withdrawal of their mind from their real or imaginary ailments."

4.

WE have noted that, in 1901, Father Noll was pastor at Kendallville and responsible for two missions: Ligonier, nineteen miles away, and Millersburg, twenty-eight miles away. Now he was asked by Bishop Alerding—recently elected to succeed Bishop Rademacher—to take care of Rome City, which was eight miles to the north, and the town of Albion, twelve miles southwest. The priest was in charge of five Catholic communities.

He could offer Mass at Albion only once every three weeks, and on a weekday at that, excepting in months that had five Sundays. His parishioners there were exceptional Catholics—of English parentage, bearing such names as Sedgwick, Moorhouse, Shuttleworth. They all turned out every time the priest came, and practically all of them received Holy Communion.

Nowadays one can drive from Kendallville to Albion in twenty minutes, but in those days it took the priest

two days to make the round trip. He had to take the Grand Rapids & Indiana Railroad from Kendallville to Avilla, where there was a delay of several hours before he could get a train on the Baltimore & Ohio from Avilla to Albion. This was always done the day before the Saturday Mass. The next day, the same thing was done in reverse. The train left Albion at noon for Avilla, only six miles away. Then the priest had to wait until evening for a train to Kendallville.

Looking after his flock, so widely scattered, and taking care of their emergency calls, was a man-sized job. Its only compensation from the natural point of view was that the frequent train rides and hour-long waits in railroad stations gave him ample time for reflection on the question that haunted him: How to get a true picture of the Catholic Church before non-Catholic America.

CHAPTER SIX

The Ripple Before The Wave

EARLY in 1902, much to the concern of Bishop Alerding, his diocese developed a sore spot at Besancon, ten miles east of Fort Wayne.

The original settlers of the area had come from France in the 1840's, had named their village "New France," and elected St. Louis, King of France, as the patron of their church. They later changed "New France" to "Besancon," because practically all of them had come from that diocese in the old country.

The parish had first been taken care of from the Cathedral in Fort Wayne, but in the course of the years the congregation acquired its own church and rectory and was shepherded by a long succession of pastors in residence—priests of the Congregation of Holy Cross, most of whom at that time were French by birth.

The storm-center of the present trouble at Besancon was Father La Bonté, a French Canadian ordained by Bishop Rademacher in 1894. Because the Bishop had no other priest to spare, young Father La Bonté was immediately placed over the Besancon congregation. He was well received and gave satisfaction until, after consultation with the Bishop, he decided that the future of his parish depended on the establishment of a parochial school.

In 1884, the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore had decreed that "near each church, where it does not exist, a parochial school is to be erected within two years from the promulgation of this Council, and is to be maintained in perpetuity, unless the Bishop, on account

of grave difficulties, judge that a postponement be allowed."

History has since verified the wisdom of that decree, but nevertheless the Catholic of our day would find it hard to imagine the controversy it stirred up, not only outside the Church, but within as well—when even a great churchman like Archbishop Ireland, many years later, put himself on record as opposing it as a norm to be followed in all cases.

It became the back-breaking task of that generation in the clergy to get those schools built, to pay for them, and keep them running. It is surely safe to say that in the average parish, maintenance of the school eats up half the income. But Catholics of today are accustomed to that. They now contribute more than double what their grandparents contributed.

Further, most of us have been born and reared in this land of plenty, where generosity is the rule and money goes easily because it comes with equal ease. But our grandparents, especially those from Europe, were not accustomed to a system whereby the Church is supported by voluntary contributions. In their homelands, the Church had been State-supported. The individual farmer saw little cash, and what little he did see, he was inclined to hang on to.

So poor Father La Bonté's proposed school became the signal for a split in the parish. Most of the families lived at quite a distance from the church. Their children would either have to walk it or be driven there by horse every day. And if their children could not enjoy the benefits of a new school, they certainly did not intend to contribute for the education of other peoples' children!

A few agitators set to work sedulously organizing a

hard core of opposition. They hired a Fort Wayne attorney and had him draw up a legal remonstrance, designed to enjoin the Bishop and their pastor from going ahead with the new school. In this instrument they vowed not only that they would refuse to make any contributions toward the project, but also declared that they themselves would stop going to church and would do everything in their power to dissuade their families from attending.

In the teeth of all this, Bishop Rademacher gave Father La Bonté the nod and he went ahead with his school—a frame structure with a sliding partition between two large classrooms so that the building could also be used as a parish hall for entertainments.

The opposition group held out just the same and, since they constituted about half the parish, Father La Bonté quietly dropped out of the picture. He resigned.

Perhaps as a punitive measure, the Besancon parish was left without a pastor from January until June. It was then that Father Noll happened into the situation. He had gone up to the Cathedral from Kendallville for the Ordinations that year and after the ceremonies the Bishop asked to see him. By his activities among the non-Catholics, and especially by the adroit way in which he had negotiated the transfer of his residence from Ligonier to Kendallville, he had tagged himself with his superiors as something of a "trouble-shooter." He was resourceful, diplomatic, and talented as a peace-maker.

Bishop Alerding proposed sending him to Besancon with the mission of reconciling the dissidents.

"Because of the dissension there," he said, "I would make it rather a request than a command. The situation is so difficult that I won't put you under obedience. Let

us put it this way: In the name of God, will you accept the pastorate at Besancon?"

"You know, Bishop," the priest replied, "that I am perfectly willing to serve the interests of the diocese in any way at all, but I feel that I don't know quite enough French. I can just about hear confessions in the language and that's all.—And those people are accustomed to sermons in their own language."

The Bishop made a gesture of impatience.

"Give it a try, John," he said. "You'll make out. Besides, those people have been without a pastor so long now that they'll welcome anyone—even if it is an Irishman who's half-German."

He smiled in a tired sort of way and the interview was over.

Father Noll had been almost four years at Kendallville and the people there had become very much attached to him—an affection that was warmly reciprocated on his part. At his leaving, the Ligonier people presented him with a rubber-tired surrey, the last word in transportation—and the Kendallville people with a windmill, to spare him the need of pumping water from the well in his back yard. At that time the electric motor had not yet come into its own.

2.

THE church at Besancon had not been touched in over thirty years. The original fresco work was still there. On the ceiling of the sanctuary, floating on clouds and surrounded by angels, was an accurate likeness of Father Benoit, the first attending pastor, who had dug his way into the affection of his parishioners. They had painted it during his lifetime, but without consulting him. Otherwise, he would never have allowed it. But now, in 1902, there was a huge crack bisecting his face. It was

only this that reconciled the older parishioners to a new fresco job.

The side altars were nothing but boxes, painted a glossy white and covered with cloth. The image of the Blessed Virgin wore painted gloves to hide her embarrassment: she was not in possession of all her ten fingers.

His first step, then, the new pastor decided, was to make the church as inviting as possible to his congregation. With that in view, he had the whole thing completely redecorated and three new altars installed. Because the cemetery behind the church ran practically to the highway, he had an iron picket fence thrown around the entire property.

The first automobiles were now chugging along the highway at the rate of one or two every hour, much to the bewilderment of the horses. From the time of the founding of the parish some sixty-two years previously, there had been a long series of hitching posts on the side of the street opposite the church. Confident that their horses would never become used to the automobile, a delegation of parishioners called on the priest and asked him to buy some property off the road to the west of the school—a sort of parking lot where the horses would be safe against the shock of passing cars.

In another year the right of way was purchased for an interurban line to run between Fort Wayne and Lima, Ohio. This added to the fears of the people. Now they would have electric cars sweeping along tracks within a hair's breadth of their horses.

As things turned out, their fears were groundless. The horses very soon grew accustomed to any sort of traffic on the highway. In fact, about the only thing that can scare a horse today is another horse.

While Father Noll was busy renewing the material side of the parish, he certainly did not intend to neglect

its spiritual life. Backed by the prayers of his Sisters and school-children, he began a systematic canvass of the apostates. In practically every parlor he had to sit through a long and detailed catalogue of grievances. By the end of the first week, the priest had it all but memorized—the list of imaginary indignities, the impositions suffered at the hands of that Father La Bonté.

He made it a practice to hear them out without interruption, to let them get the load off their chest. Then when they were all finished, he would make a little speech of his own.

"Let's suppose that everything you tell me is true," he would say; "let's suppose even that you have far greater grievances than what you have just told me. Do you believe that you should take it out on Almighty God and on your own soul? Bishop Rademacher is dead now —may God have mercy on him!—and Father La Bonte is gone. I personally had nothing to do with the affair that estranged you from the Church—but I'm here now to carry on where the others left off, and I want you, for your own temporal and eternal good, and for that of your whole family, to start back to church."

Most of the erstwhile dissenters seemed to be deeply impressed. They were a fundamentally religious people and, after all, it did seem a little silly to keep nursing a grudge when the opposing principals had left long before —a grudge that was hurting only themselves.

Nevertheless, the most he could get out of them was a promise that they would "think it over." In the meantime, they sat back and studied their new pastor to see whether or not they could like and trust him.

One after another they started slipping back to church—sheepish, self-conscious, and always in the rear pews or standing against the back wall.

Well, Father Noll thought, if they must occupy the

back pews, they might as well pay for the privilege—and that perhaps would coax a few of them forward.

The pews were always rented out in the fall of the year, so the pastor appointed three men from each section of the parish—north, south, east, and west—and asked them to meet as a committee representing the entire parish for the purpose of re-allocating the pews. When they met, he suggested that it might be better if the rental of seats were not uniform throughout the church, since most of the congregation seemed to prefer the back pews. Besides, an increase in pew rents would help finance the improvements being made on the property. They all agreed with him and everything transpired very smoothly. The vote for the new plan was unanimous and, after it was announced from the pulpit the following Sunday, it met with general approval. Those who wanted to keep the pews occupied by their families for generations were given first choice—if they would pay the increase. Thus were the quondam apostates once more assimilated with the congregation.

After most of these disaffected parishioners had been smoothed out and reclaimed for the Church, Father Noll engaged a French Jesuit to conduct a Mission. During that week he had the consolation of seeing more than ninety per cent of the parishioners receive the Sacraments for the first time in several years.

3.

SHORTLY after he had arrived in the parish, the new pastor was visited by one of these "kickers," as they were known among the faithful.

The priest had just gone to bed when he was aroused by a loud scuffling and clattering on the front porch, followed by the ringing of the doorbell.

"Who is it?" he called from behind the door.

"It's me."

"But who's me?"

"I'm Jacques Roussey," came the answer. "Grandma's sick and she wants the priest."

Father Noll opened the door and found a man who was clearly quite drunk—and who looked to be every day of fifty.

"Your grandma is sick?" he asked, trying to compute just how old "grandma" must be.

"Never mind that," the drunk said, getting a tight grip on the priest's arm. "Now I'm going to tell you what I really want—and what I want, I want!"

The priest gently walked his caller toward the end of the porch, thinking that if things got rough, he could at least drop him over the side. But, then—perhaps there was a soul in need of a priest . . .

"Just what *do* you want?" he asked.

The man hesitated—then repeated insistently: "I want you to come to Grandma Roussey."

Father Noll decided to give the poor old woman the benefit of the doubt.

"Well," he said, "I'll go. Wait until I have the hired man hitch up the buggy."

"All right," said Roussey, "but he won't have to come along. I can take you there as long as we have your horse and buggy."

"That won't do at all," said the priest. "If I don't take my own driver along, you'll have to bring me back here and then go home on foot. You wouldn't like that, would you?"

"I guess you're right at that."

They stood there a moment or two in silence.

"When were you last at church, Jacques?" the priest asked softly.

"I can't remember," he said bitterly. "But I can tell you right now that I never expect to go again."

"Why not?"

The question released a stream of vituperation which, as far as the priest could discern, was directed against Religion in general and the Pope in particular. The last remark took him a little by surprise.

"But Bonnie surely fixed him, didn't he?"

"Bonnie?" asked the priest. "Who's 'Bonnie'?"

"Bonaparte, of course—when he took old Pius VII and locked him up! Served him right, the old fool!"

So the three of them set off into the night—the priest, his driver, and Jacques Roussey.

The man dozed off a little, but after they had jogged along about four or five miles, he suddenly came to life:

"Won't they be surprised when we get there!"

"Surprised? I thought your grandmother sent for me!"

"Oh, she didn't ask for you. I just told her when I left home this morning that I might bring the priest back with me."

Father Noll meditated on this mysterious remark throughout the rest of the eight-mile trip.

The house was dark when they got there, but Roussey finally found the keyhole and swung the door open. He fumbled around until he had a lamp lighted, then he went to the stairway and called his mother.

Looking a little bewildered, she came down and met the little party in her nightgown.

"Meet the new priest, Ma!" Roussey said. With that he bolted into an adjoining room and shook his grandmother by the shoulder until she was wide awake.

"The priest is here. Get ready to die!" he shouted in French.

Father Noll looked inquiringly at Mrs. Roussey.

"She's stone deaf," the woman said, "and that's the only language she understands."

The priest began unfolding his sick-call kit.

"I suppose you know what to do," said Roussey.

"I ought to know," the priest answered dryly.

"I want you to have her make confession, and then make contrition, and then you must give her absolution, if you can—but I don't see how you can."

"Why not?" asked the priest.

"What? After all the dirt she's done?"

The grandson had a hard time convincing the old lady that Father Noll was really the priest. She had never laid eyes on him before, and she could not convince herself that her grandson, an apostate, would go to the trouble of bringing her a priest.

"Look," shouted Father Noll, dangling his rosary before her nose.

She smiled in a bemused sort of way and murmured, "I have one of those things myself."

Next the priest put on his purple stole, but she was still unconvinced.

"Anyone can put on one of those things," she said.

Father Noll then cleared the room and tried to hear her confession, but it was no use. The woman was too confused and excited. She just could not think.

The grandson returned and, taking his place at the priest's side, made the sage remark:

"Isn't it a darned shame to see Grandma die and go to hell, and here's me and the priest, and between the two of us we can't save her."

The priest turned away in disgust and started for home. She did not look to be sick at all and, anyway, he could return next day if necessary when things might be more quiet.

He learned later that although Grandma had been

in her early nineties, she had not been sick, nor had she sent for the priest.

Jacques had been up late drinking with a friend when he got the idea of making a wager. He bet his friend that, late as it was, he could get some "sucker" to drive him home. He collected his money at the expense to the priest of a sixteen-mile buggy-ride and a sleepless night.

4.

THE problem of Father La Bonté had been solved, but the underlying cause was still there. The rebels had not forgiven their erstwhile pastor, but were willing to forget him with their new priest. But the revolt, the formal opposition to the will of their pastor and their Bishop, was symptomatic of a deep sickness beneath the surface of the parish. Now the upper surface was peaceful. It was time to begin probing at the source of the evil.

The dispute had begun over the erection of a school. It required very little intelligence to appreciate the difficulties of erecting such a school, and both the Bishop and Father La Bonté had been well versed in the opposing arguments. But against these arguments would have to be measured the possible good to be derived. And this the parishioners had refused to do.

Basically, the school stood for the one big thing which had obsessed Father Noll since his first days as a priest. He had worked to bring the light of knowledge to his own people and to any other people interested, knowing that only by knowledge could he dispel the superstition and unbelief he found all about him. The school would be the one great instrument of knowledge for these people, and more particularly for their children, but half the flock had resisted violently the coming

of that knowledge. That was the real problem to be faced.

In his Sunday sermons Father Noll began to touch lightly on the subject. He did not make the school the issue, but he made knowledge the crux of the problem. Few if any of the people realized he was coming close to a sore spot; instead, they took the instructions at their simple face value. By these sermons he prepared the way for the big bite that was coming soon.

Whenever he had a free moment, he worked on a little book he would give to his parishioners, a brochure that would include the main points of the problem, well disguised, and the answer to the questions they might possibly raise. Then one Sunday morning at Mass, just before the reading of the Last Gospel, each of his parishioners was given a copy of the booklet, a small work entitled *Kind Words From the Priest to His People.*

The reaction was just about what he expected. Nobody saw the little book as a defense of the actions of Father La Bonté or the Bishop, but rather as a small work to help them learn just a bit more about their own religion. There was, too, little worry that the pamphlet would go unread in any of the homes into which it was taken. There was such a scarcity of printed material for the layman available that the pamphlet would stand out boldly, a challenge to all Catholic readers, an innovation that they could not possibly ignore. Before the week was out the parish had read the work and was delighted.

It was at this stage that Father Noll made one of the most important decisions of his life. The pamphlet was obviously a smashing success, and such a result could only come from a real hunger on the part of his parishioners for truth, a hunger that could not be satisfied by

a ten-minute talk on Sunday. If that were true at Besancon, it would most certainly be true in all the other parishes of the Fort Wayne diocese, and more than likely would be true in most of the parishes throughout the whole country. The material of the pamphlet, though aimed directly at the people of Besancon after their revolt against the Bishop and Father La Bonté, was applicable to all Catholics in every part of the world. Father Noll decided to send the work into greater channels of distribution, or at least to check further and see how wide a demand there would be for such a work elsewhere.

The Catholic Directory listed all the churches of the country with the pastors of each. With this at his elbow, Father Noll copied the names and addresses of hundreds of other churches, laboriously addressed envelopes, and began mailing copies of his pamphlet to clergy throughout the country. He made only one change—in the title—renaming the pamphlet *Kind Words From Your Pastor.* He hardly knew what to expect in the way of an answer.

During the few days following the mailing of the pamphlet, he went about his parish work earnestly. There were still families to be visited, still some souls to bring back to the fold, others to be pushed along to the better practice of their religion. His pamphlet slipped into the furthest recesses of his mind. But a week or so later the whole situation changed. An avalanche of letters awaited him one day after a very busy afternoon, all of them reading, in substance, something like this:

"Dear Father:

" I want to thank you for sending me a copy of your pamphlet, *Kind Words From Your Pastor.* I have just had time to read it, and it is a work that should have been done a long time ago.

"If it is possible I should like to procure some for my own parishioners, and would gladly pay for about two thousand if you could send me that many. I pray that you will keep up the apostolate of the pen. There is, we both know, a grave need for such work.

"Devotedly yours in Christ,

"_____"

The pastors were beginning to answer.

For the next several months the answers poured in. Each one represented at least a great cheer from some part of the country, and in most of the letters was a request for a few hundred or a few thousand copies. The original plates were still at the printers, and in the next weeks thousands of copies began rolling off the press.

There was something dreamlike about the whole thing. Orders were packed and expressed by the publishers in Fort Wayne. It was hard for Father Noll to realize that his first bit of work with a pen, the initial effort to do what had been crying to be done for so many years, was causing a stir all over the Church in America. At this stage his own name was not very important; but, nevertheless, here his first public work was, almost overnight, a significant contribution to American Catholicity. Father Noll expected only a ripple at first, but it was a torrent that necessitated several large editions in a few months, spreading out from the center. And in that same center there was brewing a mighty wave that would shortly be sent out in the wake of that ripple. He did not know it at the time, but with that little book Father Noll had taken his first big step along the work that was to be a vocation within a vocation for the rest of his life. It is still in demand after forty-eight years.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Father Noll, Editor

IN 1906, Bishop Alerding was faced with trouble in another parish of his diocese—Hartford City. Oil and natural gas had been discovered there in the 1890's, a succession of industries started to move in—especially glass factories—and the town began to boom.

Most of the glass workers were French-speaking people from the Walloon District of South Belgium. For that reason, Bishop Rademacher had sent them Father Charles Dhé, a priest who had been born, educated, and ordained in France.

Father Dhé arrived in March, 1894, and very soon became one of the town's most trusted and prominent citizens. The heads of the glass industry cultivated his friendship and came to respect him so deeply that they supplied him with all the funds needed to put up a church not only at Hartford City but also at Dunkirk and Montpelier, two missions dependent on the parish at the time. Dunkirk prospered so well that it was given its own resident pastor in 1900.

There was an abundance of natural gas in the neighborhood, with two rival companies competing for patronage. The townsmen benefited by a flat rate of twenty-five cents monthly for all the gas they could use, whether for cooking, or for heating and lighting their homes. The supply played out, though, after the engineers piped it into Chicago. One effect of this was that every home had to install a coal furnace; but more disastrous to Hartford City was the prompt removal of all the glass factories. They had to close down and, ultimately,

ten or twelve of them moved into Pennsylvania where they could be closer to the coal fields.

Certain of the engineers and promoters, though, thought that there might be still more gas available if only the wells could be driven deeper. Corporations were formed. The promoters would keep 51% of the stock for themselves and peddle the other 49% in the town. This meant that if the well "came in," the promoters had control, while if it turned out a "dry hole," the investors lost everything and the promoters lost nothing.

Father Dhé explained all this to his congregation, warning them that it was at best a gamble with very uneven odds. After that Mass he was visited in the sacristy by a man— a promoter—who interpreted the sermon as an attack on his integrity. He demanded an apology—which the priest refused to make.

News of the sermon and the ensuing altercation got into the papers and the congregation immediately split in two, whereupon Father Dhé was soon relieved of his pastorate.

The question now in Bishop Alerding's mind was where to put Father Dhé and whom to put in his place at Hartford City. Going over the personnel of his diocese, he thought of Father Noll—the man who had already brought harmony from discord in two trying situations. And Father Noll was at Besancon, by rights a French-language parish. Switching the two would send "the harmonizer" to Hartford City and the French priest into a parish of his own nationality. It was done. In 1906 Father Noll took possession as pastor of Hartford City with Montpelier as a mission ten miles away.

He found his parish a great beer-town, its streets lined with saloons. This phenomenon was due to the nature of the local industry—glass-making, which kept its employees under intense heat the whole day long.

Nevertheless, there was a strong prohibition movement afoot in the town. Parts of the town had already been voted dry under a local-option law, but, of course, thirsty people were still able to get their beer in the remaining "wet" precincts. This made the prohibitionists very unhappy. They called on the new Catholic pastor to get behind them in working to padlock every saloon in the community.

The priest patiently explained traditional Catholic thinking on the question. We do not believe in legislating morals. There is nothing wrong in themselves with beer or spirits. To believe otherwise is Manicheism, a heresy refuted centuries ago by St. Augustine. The evil lies not in the use but in the abuse of liquor. And Father Noll certainly did not intend to turn the Catholic Church in Hartford City into a propaganda mill for prohibitionism.

While local interest in the question was at its highest pitch, he inserted an advertisement in the local paper announcing that he would deliver an open lecture at the Opera House on "Temperance and Total Abstinence."

It was a huge success. The house was packed. So, while he had them there, he invited them all to sit in on a series of lectures on Catholic belief and practice that he planned to deliver in his own church. As at least one visible result of these lectures, two of the town's most prominent citizens were converted—a physician and a banker, and soon another physician and his wife.

2.

FATHER Noll early found that he could always appeal to a sense of fair-play native in the average American, who enjoys nothing better than a fight, provided there is no foul play. If it can be demonstrated that the proceedings have been underhanded or malicious, his sense

of justice is outraged and, regardless of his previous sympathies, he is ready to acclaim the one who fought cleanly. This holds true not only in the field of sport, but in religion as well.

It was with no small interest, then, that one evening in Hartford City the priest opened his newspaper to find that the local Methodist minister planned a novel series of sermons. He intended to interview certain business men on the question: "Why do men not go to church?" Then his sermons for some weeks to come would be based on the answers he would receive to his specific questions.

One of the Catholic businessmen decided to be ready for the parson's question, so he called on Father Noll for counsel. Together they decided on the obvious answer:

Catholic men do go to church, so the question is irrelevant as far as they are concerned. Now, as to the Protestants, as far as Catholics can see, they hold to the principle of private judgment whereby everyone's (except Catholics') opinion on matters religious is as good as the next fellow's. Their preacher is only *primus inter pares.* So why should any Protestant man (or woman, for that matter) attend church, since the main feature of the Sunday service is the pastor's sermon, based on his own private judgment, which *ex hypothesi* has no more validity than the layman's?

They put these things into a letter and mailed it to the preacher. Two days before the series was scheduled to begin, they saw in the paper that he planned to answer them in his first discourse: "A Catholic Businessman's Reason Why Men Do Not Go To Church."

Reports got back to Father Noll that the preacher had used his subject as the springboard for a bitter attack on the Catholic Faith.

That was a clear instance of foul play. The thing was to have been a duel of wits, and here the preacher had not only left the point, but had resorted to invective and slander. So the priest asked the editor of the local daily to notice some of the man's allegations against the Church and then, as a newsy sidelight, to add that the Catholics in town were "hopping mad" over "what they termed 'flagrant lies.'"

This notice was carried by the press—and with an immediate effect. The minister's board of trustees called him to account, reminding him that he had invited businessmen generally to give their answers to his question, but that he had failed to accept the Catholic gentleman's answer in the good faith in which it had been tendered.

Apparently the poor fellow could not give a satisfactory answer, for the board served notice on him that his usefulness to the community was at an end, and he left Hartford City a few weeks later.

One would think that the local ministers would have drawn a lesson from what happened to their colleague. But no—it was not long before an "ex-priest" was billed for a lecture near the town under the auspices of one of the Protestant congregations. Father Noll did not have the man's record, but he was quite sure that he had never been ordained. This time, however, he intended to dramatize the fraud.

He first called five well-instructed laymen to his rectory and asked them to go with him to the lecture. Each of the men would be responsible for answering one certain question from the catechism.

The meeting was held under a circus tent and the talk followed the usual monotonous pattern. When the speaker had finished, the chairman arose and called for an offering as compensation for the guest speaker. Father Noll nudged the ribs of the layman sitting next to him.

"Just a minute," the man called, scrambling to his feet. "I'm a Catholic, myself, and I'd like to introduce our pastor here in Hartford City—Father John Noll. I wonder if he might be permitted a few words . . ."

"If the audience is willing," the chairman began nervously, "but let us wait until after the offering has been collected."

"What I have to say won't take very long," the priest blandly interrupted in his most stentorian voice. By now he had left his seat on the aisle and was striding down toward the front of the tent.

"What I'd like to know is this," he said, taking his stance to one side of the platform, and before the audience: "What gives this gentleman the idea that we Catholics worship the Mother of Jesus? That simply isn't true. We honor her as the greatest of all creatures—but as a creature, none the less—as one infinitely beneath Almighty God.

"It isn't true, either, to say that the Catholic Church regards the marriages of Protestants as null and void, their children as illegitimate. The speaker simply has no basis for that charge.

"In fact," he went on, staring intently at the local minister, "I doubt that your lecturer is even a Catholic, much less a priest. However," he went on, hardly drawing his breath lest he be interrupted, "we can easily settle that matter. Allow me to ask your speaker a few elementary questions—questions from our catechism—questions which every Catholic child should be able to answer."

By now the speaker was all but petrified with embarrassment, while the audience sat fascinated by the drama being enacted before their eyes.

"Will the speaker kindly answer this simple question: What is a Sacrament?"

The man stood up and walked slowly toward the lectern.

"I refuse to be embarrassed by this—this Jesuit," he burst out finally.

"Answer the question," someone shouted from the back.

"Yes—answer him."—"Tell him what he wants."—"You're supposed to be a priest."

Voices were rising from all over the tent.

Father Noll raised his hand for order.

"It appears that our speaker can't answer a question that is known and answered by every Catholic school child. Why, I dare say that any one of the Catholic laymen with me this evening can relieve this gentleman's embarrassment. Mr. Johnson," he called, searching the back of the hall with his eyes, "can you define a Sacrament for us?"

The answer was crisp and authoritative: "A Sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace."

"Do you recognize the answer, Mr. Speaker?" the priest asked sarcastically. "Now answer me this: What is actual sin?"

Sweat stood out on the lecturer's face as he fumbled with the tails of his necktie.

"This is outrageous!" he bawled.

"Answer the question!" came in a roar from the audience.

"Mr. Schwartz," the priest called, in the manner of a teacher examining his class.

"Actual sin is any wilful thought, word, deed, or omission contrary to the law of God."

"Thank you, Mr. Schwartz." The priest smiled. "Does it sound familiar to you?" he asked, turning to the platform.

And so it went, the priest grilling the impostor without mercy until he was certain that he had utterly blasted any remnants of prestige he might have enjoyed with the audience. That done, he talked informally to the crowd for about an hour, trying to straighten them out on the points misrepresented in the previous lecture.

He received a veritable ovation at the end of his talk, but only a few of the audience started to go home. Most of them remained in their places.

"Tell us some more," they began to shout. "Don't stop now."—"Go on with your talk."

"But it's eleven-fifteen," he answered genially, "and I don't know your schedule, but I must be up at six-thirty for Mass."

There was a moment's silence, then a woman's voice piped up:

"I could listen until three tomorrow morning!"

It was not until then that someone remembered to take up the collection—but the baskets returned empty to the platform.

3.

HE had a similar experience nearby at Farmland. A self-styled ex-priest named Williams was booked there for a public lecture, and the only Catholic in the town, a very zealous woman, called on Father Noll for help. Fortunately, he had this rascal's record on hand, so even while she waited, he had a thousand handbills printed up for distribution in Farmland. The handbill gave Williams' history and announced that the Catholic priest of Hartford City would be on hand to expose the lecturer.

The women got the handbills circulated, but she returned the next day to tell the priest that he had better

not come. She had heard that a group of hoodlums were planning to pelt him with rotten eggs.

Three nearby pastors gathered with him that night at Muncie and together they set out for Farmland, a community where a priest had probably never before been seen. They decided to take a few laymen along in case of trouble, and one of these offered to put up $10,000 in support of the charges Father Noll would make against the speaker.

When they got to Farmland, they found the hall so jammed that they could hardly get through to the speaker's platform. The handbills had apparently had their effect.

The Catholic party filed onto the stage where they were welcomed only by the lone Catholic woman who had arranged for their presence. It was she who introduced Father Noll to the audience.

He began his talk with a jocose reference to his own shock of red hair. Then he explained that the men with him did not constitute a bodyguard, but rather a committee that was prepared to pay the alleged ex-priest $10,000—if he could disprove any of the charges Father Noll had made on the handbills—and which he was now going to expand and verify.

The priest talked an hour while the "ex-priest" sat silent among the audience. After Father Noll had finished, the Catholic party left the auditorium, but not before they heard the anti-Catholic lecturer announcing a joint session to be held two days later with himself and ex-priest Delaney on the platform.

4.

During his four years at Hartford City, Father Noll also had charge of the little congregation at Montpelier. Although the towns were ten miles apart, they were

connected by an interurban trolley, which made it fairly easy to get back and forth. On one Sunday the priest would have his first Mass at Hartford City and the second at Montpelier. Then the following Sunday he would reverse the order.

It was at Montpelier that one of the most extraordinary incidents of his whole priestly career occurred, an incident which he could never forget, and which left its imprint on several other people of the town. It began with an emergency call to come immediately to the bedside of a Miss Kerwin, who had been taken seriously ill while at work, an illness quickly diagnosed as appendicitis.

They had rushed her from the office to her parents' home in Montpelier, but before a physician could arrive, the appendix had burst. Doctor Duemling had been called from Fort Wayne at the same time as Father Noll's call from Hartford City, and the two men arrived at the home together. Immediately the doctor began his operation, with the priest as one of the witnesses. He cut swiftly through the skin, the abdominal wall, the peritoneum. When pus literally spouted out of the incision he shook his head. The priest could see that the girl was in a desperate condition. The physician whispered to him.

"She's practically gone, Father. She hasn't a chance. You'd better give her the Last Sacraments as soon as this is over. I don't think she'll last the night." The priest nodded.

After the operation Father entered the room. She lay very still on the bed, her mouth moving slowly as she attempted to wet her lips. He dropped water from a teaspoon into her mouth. She opened her eyes, and he could see that she was trying to grope through the wall of unconsciousness to find him. Her eyes began to clear.

"I'm pretty sick, Father?"

He nodded. She closed her eyes for a moment and when they opened again they were very clear.

"Does the doctor expect me to die?"

"He isn't very hopeful. But after all, he's only a doctor. We must both make an appeal to God; He can cure, if He so desires, when human means fail."

She tried to smile, but the pain was coming back now. The thought of death was cold on her face, and the smile was only a grimace. He bent over her and spoke earnestly:

"Look. I'm not driving any bargains at a time like this. But we need help, so we've got to hope for a bargain. Your father's supposed to be a Catholic, but he hasn't practiced his religion seriously for years, and your mother has no religion at all. I want you to promise God that if He'll cure you, you'll do all in your power to get your father back to church, and your mother to join it. It's not much of a hope, but it's all we have left."

Her eyes went wide at the thought. "Father, I know mother and dad would agree to that. I'm sure of it. And do you think God will make me better again?"

"I don't know. It's easy to ask favors like this; we generally don't spend much time paying them back. He's certainly at least as generous as we are, so if we offer something really worthwhile, I think we've got a much better chance of getting an answer to our prayers."

He gave her the Last Sacraments and left. It was late Saturday night.

Next morning Father Noll went to Montpelier again for the ten o'clock Mass. Starting out of the sacristy afterward, he noticed the brother of Miss Kerwin waiting at the gate. As the priest drew near, the boy looked up at him.

"How about coming over to the house for dinner, Father?"

"I don't think I'd better come visiting till your sister's better, Son! She's very sick. She needs all the rest she can get."

The boy smiled, "But Father, she's the one who sent me after you. She's feeling much better. She'd very much like to see you . . ."

When he entered the house, both the mother and father were smiling. They went to the bedroom. The girl was there, conscious, smiling, looking as though she had enjoyed a fine night's rest.

"Father!" she exulted, "look! I'm getting well! I know it! I told Mother and Dad what I promised, and they both agree—because we know that it's God who's doing this curing, not any doctor."

The girl did get well, and speedily, too. Her parents became two of the most exemplary Catholics in the town. A month after the operation Father Noll met Doctor Duemling on the interurban between Hartford City and Fort Wayne, and the surgeon confessed that he was completely mystified.

"Father, that girl didn't have one chance in a million. Her peritonitis was the worst possible. They always die. And yet she was up and around within ten days. It baffles me . . ."

Another call to Montpelier involved a non-Catholic woman who insisted that she was possessed by the devil. When Father Noll arrived, he was met at the door by her married daughter. The old lady, it seemed, had been disturbing the household for more than a month with her strange imaginings. Since she was taking very little nourishment and growing visibly weaker, day by day, the old lady appeared to be in proximate danger of death.

Hence, almost in desperation, the daughter had called the Catholic priest to "try his luck" with the case.

Father Noll was not quite prepared to take on a case of possession, but at least he would have to determine if it were an authentic case. He sat with the woman and they talked. Five minutes' conversation with the patient was enough to convince him that she was the victim, not of the devil, but of her own imagination. She insisted that she saw a dozen devils plaguing her in her bedroom.

It was a difficult situation, calling more for diplomacy than for prayers. He reminded her that the devil is a great deceiver, the father of lies, and proposed that she call him a liar in every suggestion he made to her. She took him up on this immediately, and in the space of the next minute she shouted "Liar!" at every corner of the room.

For an hour or so he sat with her, reminding her of the enormous pride of the devil, assuring her that he would not long remain where he was recognized for his evil, and before he left she had regained something of her old composure.

When he returned to Hartford City he was tired. After supper he went to his room to work on some writing, but at nine o'clock he was roused by the ringing of the doorbell. He went to answer it, and to his complete amazement he found the woman and her daughter waiting on the doorstep. The daughter explained that shortly after his leaving her mother who, for a few hours felt great relief, had complained of apparitions of the devil again, and had insisted on the trip to see Father Noll.

As patiently as possible, he explained that the cure lay not in any power connected with his own person, but rather in following the suggestions he had made. They left shortly thereafter, but even in that short visit, the priest could remark the worn and wasted body of the

woman—worn even more by the fatigue of the journey. Several weeks later she died. He prayed that she would find peace with the angels.

It was the physician in this instance who had called Father Noll to Montpelier. In the course of his practice, he had always observed that Catholics were helped by the Sacraments. Their outward composure and mental tranquility after the last rites gave external evidence of the supernatural benefits wrought within. And, curiously, both the physician and his patient were Protestants.

5.

DURING his pastorate at Hartford City, Father Noll was asked to deliver the commencement address to the high-school students at Montpelier. The exercises were to be held in the Methodist Church.

This was something of the sort he dearly loved: an opportunity to appear before a gathering that would surely include hundreds of non-Catholics who might otherwise never see a priest. Their impression of the Catholic Church would be governed by the estimate they would form of him at the graduation ceremony—and he hoped to impress them well.

But there was one difficulty. Such occasions generally bear the character of a religious exercise, with different ministers giving the invocation and the benediction, and although such inter-credal gatherings seem to accord with our American notion of representative democracy, the priest did not like to have the graduation exercises take the form of a denominational service.

Hence he immediately asked why the graduation was to be held in the Methodist Church. He pointed out that the graduates belonged to many denominations—that some of them, perhaps, had no church affiliation at

all. Therefore, he reasoned, the Commencement should be a civic rather than a religious affair, and it should be held in some neutral auditorium such as the Opera House or some other public building.

The student delegation were impressed by his logic, but they returned in a day or so with the report that the Opera House at Montpelier had been condemned just a month previously as being unsafe for a crowded audience—so it had to be the Methodist Church.

"Very well, then," said Father Noll. "Let's have it at the Methodist Church, but let's make it a patriotic affair with martial or classical music and patriotic hymns."

And so it was done, and with considerable success—so much success that the following spring he was asked to give the same talk at Poneto, north of Montpelier, where, as far as he knew, there was not one Catholic family.

Again, for lack of an adequate public auditorium, the exercises had to be held in a Protestant church—the "Friends' Church," presided over by a woman preacher. The appearance of a priest on the platform drew an overflow crowd and gave him a splendid opportunity to explain the Catholic position on education.

"Many people who are literally steeped in prejudice," Father Noll once wrote, "would become disposed to embrace the Catholic Faith if they were approached with charity and kindness, and if the Catholic Church were given a chance to speak for itself. Unfortunately, the priest does not meet so many non-Catholics as does the layman, and that is why every Catholic should be an apostle, representing his Church creditably before his neighbors and the people among whom he works. If it becomes known that he is earnest, derives great joy from his Faith, and that his ideals are outstandingly higher

than those of others, people must be attracted, even insensibly, to the religion which stands for those ideals."

In other words, the laity are the bridge between the Catholic clergy and the non-Catholic world. If that bridge is to be secure, the laity must be well instructed and able to give an answer for the Faith that is in them.

Catholic schooling is good in its way, but not every parish has a school and not every Catholic is privileged to attend even where there are facilities. But even so, the child attends only until he is fourteen. His instruction is firm enough, but rudimentary, and then for the rest of his life he depends for the most part on the Sunday sermon, the annual Lenten series, and an occasional mission.

The formation of a well-instructed layman is the result of constant reading and deep thought. But one could hardly expect the usual layman to buy and assimilate a stock of books on Catholic doctrine.

As the priest turned those thoughts over in his mind, he finally hit upon the idea of periodical literature—a monthly magazine was the way he envisioned it then, in 1908. And the best thing he knew in that line was a thirty-two-page monthly called *Truth*. It was put out by Father Thomas Price, who was, at that time, chaplain of an orphanage in Raleigh, North Carolina.

(A few years later, by the way, this same Father Price met Father James Anthony Walsh, director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in the Archdiocese of Boston, and together they organized the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America, better known as Maryknoll, and now numbering a personnel of 1287. As the years go by, it is coming to be held more and more that Father Price was a saint.)

Now, of course, Father Noll might have hit upon *The Ave Maria, The Messenger of the Sacred Heart, The*

Catholic World, or any other of the many splendid magazines then in circulation. But *Truth* was an instructive periodical, containing six pages of answers to questions, and he was sure Father Price wouldn't mind him tampering with the format—for Father Noll had designs on the little magazine. He meant to adapt it to the special needs of his own parish.

When his bundle of *Truth* came, then, he ripped off its cover and substituted one of his own, calling the magazine *The Parish Monthly*. In addition, he stitched in four or eight monthly pages of parish notes and spiritual exhortations.

When he wrote to Father Price and asked him not to bother covering the magazines for his parish, Father Price got curious and asked just what was happening to the magazine up there in Hartford City. After obtaining the explanation, Father Price circularized the clergy of the country, recommending that Father Noll's idea be taken up more generally.

By the end of the first year, however, the Indiana pastor discovered that he had an inborn talent for writing. It came easily to him and he could with almost as much facility turn out thirty-two as the meagre four pages to which he had been confining himself—so he started writing the whole magazine himself, first a sixteen-page and later a thirty-two-page job each month. The neighboring pastors of Muncie, Marion, Union City, and Alexandria edged in on his monthly press run, which soon reached a quite respectable figure.

His next step was to send sample copies of *The Parish Monthly* to pastors of large congregations throughout the country, explaining his system and telling them that the sale of advertisements locally should bring in enough revenue to support the proposition.

It was not long before more than two hundred par-

ishes were ordering the thirty-two-page "patented core," edited by Father Noll, and circulating it among their people under whatever name they chose to call it. The cost of the insert, as well as of the local issue, was covered by the advertisements of local merchants appearing on the inside and two back covers, together with whatever inside pages they cared to add.

Many of the subscribing pastors preferred to have their whole magazine printed at Hartford City. This meant a great deal of work. Father Noll was having it done by the two printing-shops in his city, but it soon got too big for them to handle. Most of the pastors wanted their magazine by express for distribution on the first Sunday of each month, with eight, sixteen, or more pages of local matter added to the body of the magazine. Since the Hartford City printers found that they could not meet Father Noll's deadline, he was forced to turn over a great deal of the work to a large printing firm in Muncie.

Most of this work on *The Parish Monthly* was done with his own hand. Although he was still pastor of Hartford City with Montpelier dependent on his ministrations, still subject to sick calls, confessional work, convert instructions, and the welter of other responsibilities incumbent on a pastor, he still found time, somehow, first to canvass the clergy by mail, then to write up his thirty-two pages each month, and in addition edit and read proof on two hundred different sets of locally written copy. When one thinks of the bookkeeping problems involved and the answering of correspondence from readers, it makes one wonder how he escaped being eaten alive by stomach ulcers.

All this began in 1908, and the magazine is still flourishing after more than forty years. In 1938, owing to the number of individual subscriptions apart from

bundle-orders going into parishes, its name was changed from *The Parish Monthly* to *The Family Monthly*—although pastors who distributed it in bulk were still free to order it under its former title.

Then, in 1945, it was decided to reduce it in format to the present-day "digest" size, and to increase the number of pages from thirty-two to forty-eight. At the same time, it was renamed *The Family Digest.* It is still going out in bundles, still carrying locally written copy, still paid for in many instances by the sale of space to local advertisers. Its present circulation is well over 160,000 copies monthly.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Our Sunday Visitor

BY the time he was thirty-five and hardly twelve years a priest, Father Noll had achieved national stature as a church-publicist. His booklet, *Kind Words From Your Pastor,* had carried his name into thousands of rectories throughout the country, and *The Parish Monthly* was making him still more widely known.

In an effort to allow the young editor further leisure for his writing and journalism, Bishop Alerding in 1910 appointed him pastor, with an assistant, at St. Mary's Parish in Huntington. Built of red pressed brick and stone, St. Mary's was easily worth $400,000 by present standards. In addition, there was an ample rectory and a four-room school.

With him he brought the housekeeper who had been his faithful servant since 1899; also Stephen Batt, the man of all work whom he had inherited as sexton at Besancon. Batt had formed a deep attachment to Father Noll, having followed him from Besancon to Hartford City; he now refused to be left behind.

It was easy enough adjusting to St. Mary's, where there was no financial problem and where the people were loyal and devout. But the big problem that confronted Father Noll was the transference and execution of the vast amount of printing being done by the firms in Muncie and Hartford City. There were three printers in Huntington willing enough to help, but they could not absorb all the work at once.

Providentially, a windfall came his way. Although Huntington already had a newspaper of its own, a certain Fred Bippus decided to organize a second news-

paper, so he rented the Roche Building, a three-story business block belonging to St. Mary's Parish, and installed the last word in printing equipment—linotype, flat bed, and job presses. But he soon realized that the town was too small to support two papers, and he decided to buy out the other paper and forget his original venture.

Accordingly, he stopped in at the rectory one day and offered to sell to Father Noll on a time payment plan, his whole plant. It was completely new and set to go. The priest now found himself with more printing presses than he could handle, for they were able to chew through the entire press run of *The Parish Monthly* in a few days.

2.

IN the meantime, the temper of the forces opposing Catholicism had changed. They had become more intense and better organized. Between 1909 and 1912, the Socialist movement grew so rapidly that one of its organs, *The Appeal To Reason*, published at Girard, Kansas, counted a circulation of over a million a week. Other Socialist papers and magazines, patronized by other hundreds of thousands, were *The People's Press, The American Socialist, The Christian Socialist*—issued from Chicago, and Eugene Debs' *Melting Pot,* published in St. Louis. The Socialist Party itself and the Socialist Labor Party gathered a combined following of several millions and constituted a formidable threat to the American way of life.

Now Socialism, as it then existed, lay under the condemnation of Popes Pius IX, Leo XIII, Pius X, Benedict XV, and Pius XI, insofar as it was opposed to religion and morality, and insofar as it denied the legitimacy of private ownership, strove for the promotion of absolute equality among men, and tried to foment class hatred.

The Socialism of 1912 was far from the milk-and-

water Socialism represented by *The New Leader* of our own country and the Atlee party in present-day England.

The earlier Socialism was the Communism of its day. All the Socialist organs advertised and recommended the books of Karl Marx, of Hegel, of Engels—all atheists and anti-Christian. *The Appeal To Reason* circulated chiefly among the laboring classes. But nearly half of these were Catholics, and they raised a mighty protest against its constant hammering at religion. So the party leaders decided to split their propaganda. *The Appeal* would be reserved for the "bread and butter" argument—the advertising of the gorgeous millenium that would come about when Socialism was finally enthroned in the land, while a new paper, sponsored by *The Appeal To Reason* and named *The Menace,* would be devoted exclusively to propagandizing against God—more specifically, against the Catholic Church.

But the apostles of Socialism at that time, it appears, were far more interested in battling religion than improving the poor, so they gradually abandoned *The Appeal* and spent all their time boosting *The Menace.* It was not long before circulation of *The Menace* climbed to the million mark, while *The Appeal* languished proportionately. Most people first met *The Menace,* not through having subscribed, but by finding it on their front porch the morning after a midnight delivery.

Since anti-Catholicism seemed to be so successful as a money-making formula for *The Menace,* a rash of imitators broke out all over the country—no less than thirty—and the country was lashed by bigotry as rarely before in its history. Some of these turbulent sheets traveled under picturesque titles—such as *The Peril, The American Defender, The American Sentinel, The Beacon Light, The Crescent, The Converted Catholic*

Evangelist, The Crusader, The Emancipator, The Guardian, The Good Citizen, The Jeffersonian, The Liberator, The Masses, The Patriot, The Silverton Journal, The Sentinel of Liberty, The Torch, Watson's Magazine, The Yellow Jacket, and a host of others. Not many of them lasted beyond a few years—and *The Menace* was the grand-daddy of them all.

They all tried to build circulation by sending men around the country who had previously toured on behalf of Socialism. There were scores of others, too, often advertised as ex-priests and ex-nuns—mountebanks, for the most part, persons without character, parading under false colors and willing to co-operate with any fraud in return for a price. Usually editors of *The Menace* wrote a talk for them to memorize because, besides the collection they received from the audience, they were to solicit subscriptions for that paper. Generally, they spoke under the auspices of a Socialist unit or some gullible Protestant congregation willing to take up a "silver offering" on their behalf.

Father Noll decided that the best way to destroy the influence of these "lecturers," out to exploit bigotry, would be by scotching the parent sheet, since nearly all the other anti-Catholic editors and speakers depended on *The Menace* for source-material.

The priest's investigation uncovered the fact that the original founder of *The Menace,* who had come over from *The Appeal To Reason,* had committed suicide; that W. F. Phelps, his successor, formerly business manager of *The Appeal,* had been fired because he was considered too immoral to work even under Socialist auspices.

Two priests, under suspension by their Bishops, testified that books they were supposed to have written against the Church had actually been written in large

part by members of *The Menace* staff. One of them—Father Crowley—charged that his royalties from the book were in arrears; and the other—Father Fresenborg, who later returned to the Church—declared that what he had to retract had been written in *The Menace* office.

W. F. Phelps and Earl McClure got rich from *The Menace.* It was a prodigious money-maker in its day. Yet the sheet went into receivers' hands after Father Noll had killed it and the editors between them had milked its patrons dry. In December, 1919, after the paper's death, the publishing plant burned down, but the insurance company refused to honor the claim, for reasons that can easily be surmised.

Catholic defense against this surge of Socialism and bigotry was practically non-existent. Max Pam, a Chicago attorney, conceived the happy thought of dividing $50,000 between Notre Dame and the Catholic University to found a chair for Catholic philosophy as applied to national economies. But that was at most a gesture.

The Catholic press at the time was operating almost entirely on the diocesan level. In our day we have the Catholic Press Association and the National Catholic Welfare Conference News Service. This latter serves as a focus for news of the world. Every Catholic editor is a correspondent, relaying significant developments in his neighborhood to "NC" in Washington. "NC" in turn, has its own observers stationed in every important city on the face of the earth.

All this information daily pouring into Washington is first assimilated and rewritten, and then it is rushed on mimeographed sheets to all the subscribing members.

But this has been a development since 1920 or thereabouts. Ten years earlier, the average Catholic paper could only comment on the headlines appearing in the

daily press, rounding out its columns with reports of diocesan appointments, meetings of organizations, corner-stone layings, and the like.

In many instances these papers were edited by laymen as a means of earning their livelihood. Subscription lists were built up by a house-to-house canvass of the diocese. Because their "reader interest" was so scant, their patronage came chiefly from those staunch families who felt it a pious duty to support the Catholic press—such as it was.

Both clergy and laity, of course, very soon felt the pressure of this rising bigotry. The people began calling on their editors and on their clergy for answers to the preposterous slanders against the Church being spewed out by *The Menace* week after week.

It was a situation that cried aloud for someone to walk in and just take hold—someone to establish a sort of national clearing house of information on anti-Catholic activities, and to find some means of disseminating those data for the use of the American Church.

That was the overall picture when Father Noll took over the newspaper plant in Huntington—in 1911, the very year in which *The Menace* was founded at Aurora, Missouri. As he turned over the pages of that hate-sheet, week after week, he gradually formed the resolve to establish a national weekly that should serve for the defense of the Church, and the exposure of hypocrites.

3.

EARLY in 1912, he had his printer reproduce two pages of *The Menace* and on their reverse side a proposed Catholic answer in newspaper format. These he mailed to practically every Catholic pastor in the United States as a specimen of what their people were up against in their day-to-day contacts with Protestants and other

non-Catholics. With this sample he sent a letter asking the pastor if he would patronize a Catholic paper of equal size to be sold to the clergy in bundles for distribution at the church door. This Catholic weekly would instruct his parishioners and supply a refutation of the false accusations being circulated by professional anti-Catholics.

All the promotion work was done by Father Noll in person. Of course, he was assisted by his printing-plant clerks in the stupendous chore that involved copying thousands of names from *The Catholic Directory,* and then stuffing, stamping, and sealing the envelopes.

But it was a dramatic appeal. While it is not true to say that the Catholic priest lives in an ivory tower far from any commerce with heretics or schismatics, nevertheless he is shielded from contact with the more gross forms of anti-Catholicism. Many a pastor receiving Father Noll's packet, was experiencing his first meeting with *The Menace.*

The response was instantaneous. Volume One, Number One of the new paper was dated May 5, 1912, with a press run of 35,000. Orders poured in so rapidly that by the end of that first year the circulation had climbed to 200,000. By the end of the second year it had doubled itself to 400,000. Since then its increase has not been so spectacular, although circulation of the paper now stands over 800,000. It would very probably have reached 2,000,000 or more if in the meantime the Catholic Press Association had not been organized. This group was able to raise the standards of the Catholic Press, making two score papers far more readable. Many new papers were founded, and *The Denver Register* was put on a national basis under Monsignor Matthew Smith, who began supplying small dioceses with their own paper under *Register* sponsorship.

Our Sunday Visitor was chosen as the name of the newspaper, a friendly title and neutral as far as indicating any bias one way or another. As an alternate name, summarizing its editorial policy, Father Noll always printed "The Harmonizer" in small capitals, with a little "gadget" showing a handclasp.

In 1913, the Jesuit weekly *America* made the editorial notation that:

"A circulation of 160,000 copies per week has been attained by *Our Sunday Visitor*, a paper issued by the Catholic Publishing Company, of Huntington, Indiana. It is less than a year since Father Noll, of Huntington, conceived the notion of bringing out a weekly four-page paper, of general appeal, to counteract the widely-circulated *Menace*, and other papers of that ilk. Father Noll had already been conducting for some time *The Catholic Monthly*, with special editions for some two hundred parishes, and the issue of this *Monthly* was some sixty thousand per month.

"His new venture, which he called *Our Sunday Visitor*, was even more successful. Its first issues ran up to forty or fifty thousand copies, and the number steadily rose, until within one year of the paper's beginning, it reached a hundred and sixty thousand.

"*Our Sunday Visitor* has, of course, especial features which help to account for so rapid a rise in circulation. It eschews sectional or local news, so as not to interfere with the diocesan papers; it prints much apologetic and instructive matter, of a sort that the ordinary Catholic wishes and needs to read. Then, too, its price, a cent a copy, with reductions for quantities, makes it possible for pastors to supply it to their parishioners, and for friends to give it to friends. Yet, even when one takes into account the special circumstances which have helped *Our Sunday Visitor* to its swift prosperity, its wide

circulation is a standing proof of the possibilities of Catholic journalism in the United States. A circulation of a hundred and sixty thousand copies per week, gained within a year from its commencement, by a paper which specializes in apologetics and religious instruction and explanation—this is an encouraging sign of the times."

The paper has always served a double purpose: first, it must clear the ground by refuting anti-Catholic libels; only then could it go on with its mission of positive instruction.

Thus, practically from the start, the paper has periodically displayed this challenge, permitting Catholic organizations to insert it in secular papers throughout the country:

$1,000 REWARD!
FOR PROOF OF ANY OF THESE CHARGES

1. Catholics cannot be loyal to the United States Government, for they owe temporal allegiance to the Pope;
2. The Pope interferes with American politics;
3. The Catholic Hierarchy controls a political machine;
4. Catholics are forbidden to read the Bible;
5. Catholics worship images and statues;
6. Immorality is common in Monasteries and Convents;
7. The Jesuits teach that "The end justifies the means";
8. The Knights of Columbus take the so-called "Alleged K. of C. Oath";
9. The Jesuits take the "Jesuit Oath" circulated by their enemies;
10. Girls are forced into the Sisterhoods or retained in them against their will;
11. The Catholic Church refuses to acknowledge as valid the marriages of Protestants;
12. Catholics are given undue government patronage;
13. Our country would be benefited by closing the parochial schools;
14. The assassins of Lincoln, Garfield, McKinley, were Catholics;
15. Lincoln's dark-cloud utterance is genuine;

16. Catholics believe that the Pope should rule in a temporal way over the world.

Claimants for this reward were asked to submit their evidence to a jury of three people: a Catholic, to be chosen by *Our Sunday Visitor;* a Protestant, to be chosen by the claimant; and a neutral, to be agreed upon by both parties.

The reward has never been claimed.

4.

WHILE Father Noll edited his paper always with half an eye to its Protestant readers—of whom there would be thousands, and while in his writings he always tried to use tact in combating prejudice and heresy, he has never forgotten that most of his readers are "plain folk" accustomed to plain, blunt language. He has never felt free to let his readers forget such fundamental facts as, for instance, that the Protestant Bible exists as a violation of the Catholic copyright, that Luther was a neurotic priest, that Henry VIII was an adulterer, and—in general—that Catholics have the whole truth while Protestants have only a part and often a twisted part at that. But his treatment of such matters is always without bitterness.

Of course, there have always been those, even among Catholics, who call it unfair controversy when you keep reminding a High Church Episcopalian that it was not too long ago that the English were trimming the ears off anyone caught assisting at Mass; or when, for the benefit of his present-day followers, you explain precisely what Luther meant with his doctrine of total depravity. But then there are others—and they are in the majority—who think every man should know just what his church stands for, and the circumstances of its origin.

Week after week, through year after year since 1912, *Our Sunday Visitor* patiently answers non-Catholic questions on every subject—on priestly celibacy, what happens in the confessional, what goes on in convents, the proper use of medals and images. Along more central lines, it runs special articles on doctrinal and moral subjects and frequently answers enemies' charges in a dialogue fashion.

As *America* remarked, *Our Sunday Visitor* differs from its journalistic contemporaries in one vital aspect: it is not, does not pretend to be, and doesn't want to be a newspaper——except in its dozen diocesan editions. In its National Edition, it stands above the news, leaving that to the diocesan press. *Our Sunday Visitor's* function is to instruct the laity, to defend the Church, and not to report but to footnote the news and bring it into focus against the larger screen of Catholic thought and tradition.

Such is the character of the little paper founded by Father Noll at Huntington, Indiana, in the spring of 1912.

CHAPTER NINE

Our Sunday Visitor (II)

A STRANGER stepping into the home of a large family is baffled at the smoothness with which the household runs. Clothes are washed, tables set, meals cooked, babies dressed and fed, while the mother—cool and tranquil—presides over the whole commune.

"How do you do it?" the stranger might ask. "If I were in your place, I would surely lose my mind—or several of the children—before the week was out!"

The answer is simply that the growth of the family was organic in its way. If fourteen or sixteen children had been dumped into her lap at once, the mother herself might have ended in a nervous breakdown. But in the ordinary course of routine, she got first one baby, then another, with spaces in between that allowed for adjustment.

So it was with *Our Sunday Visitor.* Inspecting the plant as it stands today, its editorial offices, the circulation department, the mailing department, the business office, all of it undisturbed by the thunder and crashing of the huge rotary presses, one might be inclined to ask "How did he do it?" After all, the whole setup only represents the spare-time hobby of the man who was a local pastor.

But the fact is that Father Noll had cut his eyeteeth on *Kind Words From Your Pastor.* That had served as his initiation into editorial work. He had written it himself and supervised its printing. Then he had promoted it by addressing advertisements to the pastors whose names he found in *The Catholic Directory.* Finally, he had filled his orders, kept books on the thing,

and answered the correspondence that resulted—all by himself.

The Parish Monthly had been a step further along the line. But still it only meant that now he had a monthly deadline, considerably more copy to edit and proof-read, more mail and more bookkeeping.

It was after a four-year apprenticeship with *The Monthly* that he launched *Our Sunday Visitor*. Of course, he was prepared to step up his activities, so that when his circulation began to skyrocket at the rate of 4,000 weekly, for two solid years, while he was pleasantly surprised, he was able to take it in stride.

When he bought out Fred Bippus' plant, he kept the printing staff intact. The first week or so, he tried to do all the secretarial work with a single clerk, but it was a little too much for him, so he also hired a bookkeeper, stenographer and proof-reader. In later weeks he employed someone to put in charge of mailing; someone to take care of circulation; another of advertising—and so it went by easy stages.

Since he had no money himself, but was heavily in debt on the score of his printing plant, his original promotion letter—the one that went out with a facsimile of *The Menace*—had asked pastors for payment in advance if that were at all possible. He wanted *Our Sunday Visitor* to pay its own way.

And it did—with a vengeance! Practically every response came back with a check clipped on it. In that hectic spring of 1912, his clerk sat opening mail at his desk with a wooden packing case at his side. On each letter he would jot the size of the order and the amount of the enclosure, circle the name and address of the pastor concerned, and then lay it to one side. Orders were filled from that stack of letters until he realized,

finally, that this growth was likely to go on almost interminably, and hired a few experienced persons to help systematize the business. That packing case? It was to receive the checks as he separated them from the letters. These were then banked by an assistant.

It was very soon apparent that, all unintentionally, he had tapped a rich source of revenue. Weekly receipts at the end of the first year were $1,000 apart from advertising. The following year the figure climbed to $2,000. Unless he did something drastic, he was likely to become rich.

Now while Canon Law forbids a priest to engage in commercial business it does not forbid him to hold his honest earnings. And money is a very handy thing to have, as most people are willing to concede.

But as Father Noll meditated on his present situation as an unintended proprietor of a business enterprise that promised to become ever more lucrative, he formed the conviction that his income was consecrated in a sense. His one thought was the advancement of God's Kingdom on earth, the defense and propagation of the Faith, and this money coming in represented the pennies of good, poor Catholics all over the land interested, like himself, in the things of God. He fully made up his mind that he must not be so much the owner as the trustee of those funds.

And so, after installing a rotary press at his plant and paying all his debts, Father Noll, in 1915, formed a corporation under the Charitable and Eleemosynary Law whereby all proceeds of the Corporation above operating expenses are pledged to religious, educational and charitable causes.

He himself has never been on the payroll of his own firm, nor has he ever accepted an honorarium or a penny

in royalties from his voluminous publications. Instead, he was ever content to get along with the thousands of his fellow priests in the diocesan priesthood, accepting the simple living provided by his parish and paying his personal expenses from the moderate income he had as pastor of St. Mary's Church.

It is an inflexible rule at *Our Sunday Visitor* that every letter is answered. As long as he was personally in Huntington, Father Noll took care of all correspondence himself—except that pertaining to the business of his printing plant.

The incoming mail is often exasperating, too. Poorly instructed Catholics take the editor to task for some plain statement of Catholic truth. Many of the readers ask questions that have no bearing at all on Religion—or they ask questions so elementary that one is tempted to question their sincerity. They protest the book reviews and the advertisements. They are outraged because the editor could find no room for the sonnet dashed off one night by their twelve-year old daughter. Then there are the bigots with their little tracts excoriating "The Scarlet Woman of Babylon"—and the painfully earnest souls who scratch out reams of uninteresting copy with the idea of achieving front-page publication.

Each personal letter must be answered—and sweetly. Father Noll established it as a firm tradition.

2.

IS the paper read? The mail at *Our Sunday Visitor* presently averages more than two hundred letters a day—not including business mail, but letters commenting on editorial matter, articles, inquiries about everything under the sun. These are only the letters that reach

Huntington. But many readers write directly to the authors of articles in the paper. One priest came into the offices at Huntington recently with eight hundred letters received from readers over a space of two years.

Another contributor, a pastor, asked the paper not to publish his address because each article brought him dozens of letters—so many that to answer them all he would have to neglect his parish. After that, his mail was taken care of from Huntington.

One man advertised in the paper that he would send out a certain prayer free to all applicants. His letter, as published ran to only 150 words. It drew 8,400 replies.

The Diocesan Director of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in Tucson, Arizona, once used the columns of the paper to broadcast an appeal for holy pictures, Christmas cards, and religious articles of every description.

"I cannot find adequate words to express my appreciation of your readers' kindness in responding to our appeal," he wrote when it was all over. "The results amazed me. For weeks the Tucson postal truck made two trips daily to our C.C.D. headquarters. The reading room, which was the only place available to put their donations, is stacked four feet high with big and small, fat and lean packages. They came from every State in the Union and from Canada, and include religious articles of all kinds, as well as dolls, candy, and games.

"The Confraternity is deeply grateful to the thousands of *Our Sunday Visitor* readers who spent no less than $1,500 in postage alone to help the work of the Tucson Confraternity of Christian Doctrine."

During World War II, the editor published the following letter:

369 Tech, Sch. Sqd. St.,
Scott Field, Ill.

Dear Editor:

I am writing this letter hoping that among your many readers there will be an organization or group that will help us.

Here at Scott Field we have a decided lack of Catholic literature. Our one Chapel serves all Faiths and in the rear of the Chapel is a collection of non-Catholic prayerbooks and literature, but none Catholic.

I have started a Rosary League here at Camp Scott; the small group meets each morning in the Chapel for rosary and litany. Our main trouble is the lack of rosaries, prayerbooks, medals, New Testaments, etc. Perhaps among your readers there will be someone who can help us. Believe me, any help will be gratefully received.

Pvt. Earl R. Schutzius

A few weeks later, the following letter was received by the editor in Huntington:

UNITED SERVICE ORGANIZATION, Inc.
USO

Member Agency
The National Catholic Community Service

Belleville, Illinois
July 31, 1942

Editor, Our Sunday Visitor
Huntington, Indiana
Dear Sir:

Ever since you published a soldier's letter on July 5 we have been in a deluge of unparalleled generosity. In his short, well-meaning letter this private asked for Catholic literature and religious articles such as rosaries and prayerbooks, which seemed to be lacking among his buddies. But this was not due to lack of material at the proper centers of distribution, but more to a lack of information as to where these centers were; soldiers, you see, very seldom read all the announcements that crowd the many bulletin boards in camp.

At the time this letter was published there were

thousands of Catholic men at Scott Field who were dependent upon the two Catholic chaplains. One of these chaplains was on sick leave, so it seemed to many that there was a lack of something or other. And at present the other chaplain has reported for overseas service, making the situation very deserted appearing, although resident priests from nearby communities have taken over part of the demands of the service men.

The situation was quite a problem at the time the responses to the soldier's appeal began to arrive. The first day brought eight mail sacks full of packages. Imagine the private's surprise upon being called to the squadron mail room where, stacked in a corner were the sacks of mail.

But, better still, imagine the belligerent look and stance of the sergeant who, already overtaxed for space and time, had to suffer this flood. And, as if this was not enough, the private became the goat of the squadron, being ribbed from morning to night, and called everything from a fanatic to a dumb bunny. But he took it. He explained to his officers that his letter was unofficial and, not anticipating such a storm of approval from *Our Sunday Visitor* readers and such a storm of disapproval from his superiors, he confessed it was probably a mistake.

This one "mistake" led to another. He could not stack the parcels in his barracks; nor could he leave them in the mail room. He had not time to acknowledge their arrival. So he transported the eight sacks of packages to the office of the one chaplain, who was already overtaxed with trying to care for the thousands of men.

It did not take this chaplain long to suggest a different reception center, one that had always assisted him in spiritual enterprises and had constantly proved a source of supply for Catholic literature and articles. That is why the private hopefully 'phoned the USO club that is being operated by the National Catholic Community Service and located in the nearby town of Belleville.

Would the USO take over the situation? Would we accept the responsibility of future shipments? Would we come get the packages? Would we open them, assort-

ing the contents, and keep them where the boys could get them? Would we do all this without the help of the private in question?

Our answer was brief—yes, we would gladly do all. As a consequence—and a marvel to behold—we have hauled over *thirty* sacks full of packages to our USO club. Out of the heaps of boxes of all sizes we have taken hundreds and hundreds of fine rosaries, prayerbooks, pamphlets, pictures, medals, crucifixes, scapulars, papers, magazines, et cetera, et cetera.

Many letters were attached to these packages. One was from an old lady who said, "I am sixty and sick, but I am glad to send this rosary to a man defending the things I have always enjoyed in life."

Another was from a lad of twelve who was glad to "help soldiers to be better."

Many letters were from lonely young hearts eager to have this chance to do something for the men in the service. Their letters usually stated: "We have no close friends or relatives in the army, so it makes us happy to be able to do something."

Then from a mother comes the stirring message that "I am the mother of thirteen children. I am old but young in spirit, especially in grave times like this. I find time to pray for you soldiers."

One of the best came from a young man who wrote, "I'm twenty years old and 1-A in the army. Sometime in August I expect to be inducted but in the meantime, if your needs are not met, don't feel shy in writing to me. I'm going to stop keeping a budget anyway."

How many brought promises of prayer and hopes of safe returns! One postscript caught our attention: It read "Hope you get Hitler!"

There you have a proof of Catholic action. And here we have a proof of it, too, for on our bulletin board is a notice that reads: "Hundreds of free religious items prayerbooks, rosaries, pamphlets, medals, kits, etc. . . . Your chaplain says 'Get them here.' "

Of course it would be fine to be able to acknowledge every gift, no matter how small or large, but neither the soldier could do it thoroughly nor we at the USO. So we are relying upon *Our Sunday Visitor* to

publish this letter as a "Thank You Everyone, and May God Bless You For the Grand Spirit You Have Shown."

We at the USO operated by the NCCS are glad to be a part of the wondrous display of Catholicity. And, for the soldiers and for ourselves, *may we suggest that no further donations be made,* for our stock will last a long time . . .

Again, thank you very much.

Sincerely yours,
Louis J. DesPres, Director

During World War II, owing to critical shortages, and even though 100,000 copies weekly were going to the Armed Forces, it was still impossible to keep up with the Chaplains' demands.

"Your paper is the most popular of all that come into this camp," one chaplain wrote, "and we could use many more copies each week . . . Send as many as you can spare. I know none will be wasted, but all will be read, passed along, and read again. Yours is the one paper that we are always short of . . ."

Dorothy Day of *The Catholic Worker* reports having seen *Our Sunday Visitor* in the most remote and unexpected places. She knows of families in isolated districts, deprived of priestly ministrations, in whom the Faith has been kept alive for a generation solely by *Our Sunday Visitor.* It was the only contact of such families with the Faith.

The reasons for such popularity are not hard to find. The paper features articles of lasting interest appealing to the *average* Catholic. They serve—as hundreds of pastors have testified—to make their people "pray better." And the paper studiously avoids anything savoring of the "highbrow." Its style is deliberately kept down-to-earth.

Here is an extract from a typical letter written by the pastor of the cathedral in a mid-western diocese:

I want to bring *Our Sunday Visitor* back to the

cathedral parish. It was distributed here at one time, but in recent years was discontinued. Now that I am in charge of the cathedral, I want to have *Our Sunday Visitor* as I have had it in all of my five previous parishes. No parish is complete without it . . .

So send me immediately 700 copies of the next issue, April 19. I want the same edition of *O.S.V.* that I have been getting in my former parish . . . 2½ cents a copy in bundle lots. This includes the regular *O.S.V.* Section, the Youth Section, and the News Section. I know our people need it and will profit from a regular reading of it . . .

Over a thousand letters filed at the publication's offices in Huntington testify to the influence *Our Sunday Visitor* exercised in bringing some poor soul into the Church. The following is typical:

I have lived in New York City all my life, but because I was born of Jewish parents who were, and are, as devout in their religion as I am in my newly found belief, I knew nothing about the Catholic Church. My first contact with Catholicity came quite by accident. I was caught in a sudden storm and sought shelter in a church which was nearby. Upon entering the building, I knew only that it was a church, and not that it was a Catholic church.

I stood in the vestibule for several minutes and then, because I noticed others entering, went inside. It was early evening. I was going home from work as were thousands of others. Hundreds of worshippers, it seemed to me, entered that church, not merely to get out of the rain, but to pray. They came, stayed a few minutes, then departed. But while there, they evidenced real devotion. Many lighted candles; others simply knelt down and prayed. Some entered a little box which I learned later was a confessional.

From my brief visit in that Catholic church and the impression made upon me by the devotion of the Catholics who entered while I was there, grew a longing to know more about Catholicity. I returned several times, and on one occasion noticed a Catholic paper in the rear of the church. I picked it up and took it home

with me. It was *Our Sunday Visitor*. The next Sunday and for weeks after, I returned to the church to get the current issue of this paper. Later I subscribed for it. For five years I read it attentively, and also the Catholic pamphlets and books which I saw advertised therein. Then I approached the parish priest at the church nearest my home, took instructions, and was baptized.

My visit to that church to get out of the rain was an accident. It might well have been a Protestant church in which I sought shelter. If it had been I would still be a Jew in religion as well as in nationality and would have missed a happiness of which previously I had never dreamed. But I do not believe I would be a Catholic today if I had not seen a copy of *Our Sunday Visitor*, from which I learned most of what I know about God and His Church.

The following letter was received early in 1952 by Mrs. Alberta Schumacher, who writes *O.S.V.'s* "Gospel Story" every week. In all, Father Matthew reported, more than 2200 letters came from *O.S.V.* readers.

Franciscan Apostolate of the Way of the Cross
49 Rawson Road, Brookline 46, Mass.
Rev. Matthew Miller, O.F.M., Director

Dear Alberta:

My delay in writing was caused by "The Modern Wiseman." Literally I am inundated with the most touching and consoling mail I have ever received thus far in the Apostolate. In two days last week nearly 500 beautiful letters dropped on my desk. They are still coming in.

The Holy Ghost must have stood at your shoulder when you wrote the article. I'm sending a few (in separate envelope) with this letter. Really the best ons are here for answer, shipping, etc. They are from sick priests, invalid nuns, wheel chair, bed-ridden sick; blind, prisoners, sanitariums, directors of the Legion of Mary, with offers to visit the shut-ins, from Protestants and isolated Catholics. If I could stand in the pulpit and accomplish with over 100 sermons, what you accomplished with that article it would make me a happy priest.

Alberta, you have been the instrument of God in putting thousands on the Holy Highway daily. How our Crucified Saviour and the Poor Souls will love and bless you for it! You *preached* a fruitful "sermon" from the "pulpit" of the "Gospel Story."

I wish the Editors of *Our Sunday Visitor* could only read the mail resulting from your article. I wish you would let them read even this hurried letter.

The joy we give flows back into our hearts. You should be very happy then for the spiritual joy you have given to the suffering Mystical Body of Christ.

With a priestly thanks and blessing!

Father Matthew, O.F.M.

Naturally, advertisers were not slow in testing the drawing power of this largest of all Catholic papers. Father Bruno Hagspiel, for instance, Mission Procurator for the Society of the Divine Word, wrote to the editor:

I am delighted with the results of my advertisements in your paper. *Our Sunday Visitor* is by all means the best medium we have. After having tried just about all of them, I am still convinced that *The Visitor* reaches the most people and is actually read. Too many Catholic publications are subscribed to as more or less an act of charity, but are never looked into. But *Our Sunday Visitor* is read through and through because it is eminently worth reading. This is why advertisements in *The Visitor* receive the finest possible response.

Almost from the start of his paper, Father Noll was approached by Bishops of smaller dioceses, one after another, asking if it would not be feasible to apply *The Parish Monthly* plan to *Our Sunday Visitor*. Just as *The Monthly* was generally used as the core of a local parish publication, so these Bishops thought that *Our Sunday Visitor* might be used in the same way on the diocesan level.

But the priest was reluctant to tamper with his

The Home of Our Sunday Visitor, founded in May, 1912

On the occasion of the Bishop's consecration by Cardinal Mundelein, June 30, 1925

Bishop Noll is the only surviving charter member of Legion of Decency Committee. Left to right: Bishop Boyle, Archbishop McNicholas, Bishop Noll and Archbishop Cantwell.

Bishop Noll and Al Smith at a Notre Dame Commencement, when Smith received an honorary degree.

formula. He did not care to set himself up as competing anywhere with the diocesan press. He did not want to undersell the regular diocesan papers and thus help to kill them.

More than thirty years ago Archbishop Keane, of Dubuque, sent his secretary, Monsignor Brady, to Father Noll to beg of him to print a new diocesan paper for him, in which the national edition of *Our Sunday Visitor* would be included.

But because the Gonner Brothers were then publishing a weekly, a semi-weekly, and even a daily Catholic paper in Dubuque, Father Noll declined to accommodate the Archbishop—on the score that the new paper would probably mean the demise of the others, with the consequent loss of their investment to the owners.

But after Monsignor Smith of Denver, began to publish such editions, many requests came to *Our Sunday Visitor* for a similar service. At this writing the paper provides twelve dioceses with a paper in which local editions are supplemented by *Our Sunday Visitor's* National Edition. It also publishes a National News Edition, edited especially for dioceses which do not have their own newspapers.

CHAPTER TEN

His Books and Pamphlets

CERTAINLY, if one were to name the all-time best-seller produced by the American Catholic Church, it would be the book named after Father Faber's hymn, "Faith of Our Fathers," and written early in his ministry by Cardinal Gibbons. The great churchman first thought it out as he rode horseback between his missions in North Carolina. Then he managed to get it down on paper after his appointment as Bishop of Richmond. The book rapidly established itself as a classic—an authoritative statement of Catholic belief.

It remained for many decades practically the only work suitable for placing into the hands of an interested non-Catholic.

In 1914, Father Noll decided to write another book for non-Catholics, but along different lines. It was his intention to develop the *argumentum ad hominem:* to quote Protestant sources in defense of the Catholic Faith. Here is his reasoning as he gave it in his preface:

1. A whole host of informed Protestant scholars confess that the teaching, practice and history of the Catholic Church are grossly misrepresented.

2. When such men speak their real convictions their utterances are as laudatory of the Church as those of our professed enemies and of the uninformed are condemnatory.

3. Since no Protestant demands more of the Christian than *faith* and *works,* he can find no reasonable fault with the Catholic Church, whose members both *believe more* and *do more* for salvation than any or all

others. This is conceded by abundant Protestant testimony.

4. The non-Catholic reader is given the *correct conception* of Christ's Church, which is fundamental to the proper appreciation of her teachings, practices, and her never-sacrificed principles.

5. The separate teachings of the Church are briefly but clearly explained, and then defended by non-Catholic scholars.

6. Catholic practices and principles are then treated, and their scriptural and rational soundness are passed on by a Protestant jury.

7. Erroneous interpretations of the Catholic attitude towards those outside her fold, towards the State, etc., are dispelled.

8. Finally, the weaknesses of the Protestant system, its fickleness, and its drifts from Jesus, are described by testimony from Protestant sources only, and he lets reputable Protestant historians pass opinion on the "Reformation" and its promoters.

This was the sort of thing Father Noll did exceptionally well. The man is gifted with a phenomenal memory. He reads quickly, he clips anything he foresees may be of use to him or may merit comment, and he forgets nothing. By the time he was finished—and he writes fluently—he found he had pieced out a volume running to over 500 pages in the course of which he had quoted no less than 500 Protestant sources.

At first he thought of calling his book *For Our Non-Catholic Friends,* and it went through its first edition under that title; but later he changed it to the more descriptive *The Fairest Argument.*

It was his first major work and—as with all of his writings—it was published by Our Sunday Visitor

Press. The paper offered him an excellent means of advertising and promoting it, so that it ran through edition after edition before it finally became obsolete, requiring a thoroughgoing revision for the admission of current, up-to-date, non-Catholic testimony—and for this he no longer had the time.

2.

A YEAR later he began to run a series of doctrinal instructions in *Our Sunday Visitor,* using dialogue form as a device for heightening interest. Each chapter was a conference between "Father Smith" and a catechumen named "Jackson." Together, Father Smith and Jackson covered the whole field of Catholic belief and practice. The feature proved to be immediately popular —so much that a few years later, at the request of the readers, it was serialized a second time in its entirety.

It was later published in book form, *Father Smith Instructs Jackson,* and it is the only work of its type that can compare with *The Faith of Our Fathers* in point of circulation. It is currently in its 61st edition—each edition having a press run of ten to fifty thousand. Thousands of priests have either used it for the instruction of converts, or have handed it to their catechumens as supplementary reading—since it closely follows the order of presentation used by the Baltimore Catechism which is basic in the tutoring of converts.

In recent years, a technique of instruction by correspondence has been developed, with candidates being solicited through newspaper advertisements and pamphlets. Non-Catholics who are remote from a Catholic church, or who are backward about approaching their local clergy for instructions, can subscribe to a correspondence course gratis. The non-Catholic is given a

text book and is then put in touch with a priest or a seminarian who takes him through the book, answering all his questions, encouraging him, praying for him, and giving him systematic tests. At the end of his course, the non-Catholic receives a testimonial certifying that he is ready for Baptism and First Holy Communion. All he needs do, then, is present this to his parish priest.

It goes without saying that the service is a godsend to busy missionaries and military chaplains.

Co-ordinating the work on a national basis is Father Lester J. Fallon, a Vincentian. Some idea of the size of the project can be formed from the fact that during World War II he supervised the instruction of 30,000 non-Catholic service-men, with the help of over 600 students in twenty-three seminaries. An average of sixty persons a day still apply for instruction by correspondence.

In his search for a suitable text book, one that would be understood by every type of mentality, Father Fallon hit upon *Father Smith Instructs Jackson.* He went to Fort Wayne, then, and spent several days with Bishop Noll, collaborating on a revision that would adapt it more perfectly to his program. Forty-eight pages of questions were added under six tests, each subdivided into two or three parts.

It has been estimated, all things considered, that over 1,500,000 persons have owned a copy of *Father Smith Instructs Jackson* in the course of the past thirty-five years. This book has been translated into many languages, including Spanish, German, Hungarian, Chinese and Japanese—also into Braille for the blind.

3.

BUT those were only the beginnings of the torrent of books, tracts, and pamphlets that were to be writ-

ten by Father Noll in succeeding decades—for there was need not only of book-length works in defense of the Church, but also of short articles, briefly treating some phase of Catholicism in need of clarification.

Taking the hint from "A Socialist Vest-Pocket Book of Facts," Father Noll got up a book that would fit into a man's vest pocket (they wore vests then!): 250 pages, set in small type, and called "A Vest-Pocket Book of Catholic Facts." This, too, was a best-seller until after the first World War when the political and economic systems were changed in many countries, and other nations lost their independence. It was, however, brought up to date, only to become antiquated again after World War Two.

Thus he rapidly built up a comprehensive list of pamphlet titles, covering every phase of Christian doctrine from Creation to the Last Judgment. These were made available to Catholics throughout the country practically at cost.

Other volumes written by Bishop Noll were *The History of the Diocese of Fort Wayne; It Is Happening Here,* a work written during the civil war in Spain in which the author recorded the names of many organizations and prominent American individuals who espoused the Communist cause of the so-called "Loyalists"; *The Decline of Nations,* in which he traced the moral decadence in the European countries as well as here in our own, during the last fifty years; *Our Public Enemy No. 1,* which he identified as "education without religion," and in which he supported his argument by testimony gathered from non-Catholic sources only—from Presidents, other statesmen, educators, ministers of the Gospel, editors of the secular press, etc. Altogether, apart from his frequent articles in the paper

and in his magazines, he has written ten book-length works and more than a hundred fairly large pamphlets.

In appraising these writings, one must always remember that Bishop Noll is before anything a journalist. He has never for a moment entertained the ambition of carving a place for himself in the annals of literature. His first purpose has always been not to entertain, not to produce art, but to instruct. The fact that for nearly fifty years he has piloted the most successful Catholic organ of mass propaganda with a circulation now exceeding 800,000 weekly—long the largest periodical of its type in the world—such a fact is an indicator both of his style and of his talent.

Like all journalists, he writes for the moment, and in a style that is notable only for its simplicity. You rarely need a dictionary when you are reading anything initialed "J.F.N." or running under the pseudonym "Lon Francis"—which is, of course, merely the inversion of his own name.

Some idea of his fluency can be gathered from the fact that a recent editorial, replete with documentation from standard reference works and running to two thousand words, took him only twenty minutes to dictate. A few summers ago, he noticed the lack of a high school textbook which related religious instruction to action. Within six weeks he had dictated a four-volume set, "Religion and Life," running to well over a thousand pages. It took two secretaries to keep pace with his dictation.

Every letter coming to his desk is answered before the end of the day. If an article should be requested in the morning mail, it goes out before two in the afternoon. If the request comes after noon, the article goes out before supper.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Acolyte Ordained

FATHER NOLL had always thought of his printing plant as being organized "to serve the Church," a slogan he often used in his advertising. In 1924, the thought came to him that he ought to have some periodical at the disposition of the clergy. Thus *The Acolyte* was born—January 1, 1925—a magazine that soon won thousands of loyal friends among the priests of the country.

Named after the server who assists the priest at the altar, *The Acolyte* found immediate favor. But many priests misunderstand the title, thinking that it was intended as a morale-booster for altar-boys!

For many years, *The Acolyte* was edited by Father Michael A. Chapman, a convert from the Anglican ministry and nationally known as an authority on the liturgy. But in 1945, Bishop Noll organized an entirely new editorial staff and called them together for a conference on the occasion of the Bishops' meeting in Washington in the fall of that year.

Father Joseph Gustafson, a Sulpician, then professor of philosophy at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore, was appointed editor, together with the present writer. Monsignor William L. Newton, then secretary of the editorial board at work on the revised translation of the New Testament for the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, accepted an appointment as associate editor.

Monsignor Chapman also consented to remain as an associate editor. Others included on the staff were Father W. S. Barr, Father Ignatius Smith, O.P., Father P. J. Lydon, Father John F. Cronin, S.S.

Also with the magazine in those days was Father John S. Kennedy of *The Catholic Transcript* of Hartford. Father Kennedy soon left the staff on finding that his new assignments would be incompatible with previous commitments.

The staff decided that their magazine would bear the character of a "trade-journal," as far as that was consistent with the dignity of the priestly state. There was a need for something informal, a forum in which the clergy—especially those in the parishes—could meet regularly for the exchange of ideas.

Symbolizing this new approach, the magazine was put in digest-format.

The name? There was much discussion over that. One of the Fathers suggested "Priest and People." Another thought it should be "Priest and Pulpit." Still another suggested, simply, "Sacerdos"—the Latin for "priest."

Bishop Noll listened quietly to every idea. Finally, he said, "Let's just call it 'The Priest.'" And so it was done.

The first letter promoting *The Priest* mentioned the fact that the new magazine would eschew footnotes—a resolution that made its older contemporaries smile behind their hands. They were mistaking the letter for the spirit. What *The Priest* meant was that never would it subject its readers to a sixteen or twenty-page dissertation, with full-dress critical apparatus, on, say, "The Doctrine of the Synaxis as Found in Justin Martyr," or "Early Christian Ascetics as Represented by Pseudo-Barnabas."

There is place for scholarship in the Church, of course, but there is also place for a fraternal magazine,

one devoted to the everyday joys and hardships of the "little" priest—something he can reach for at the end of a long day, something that will serve him with a little edification in a light-hearted way.

The magazine made its first appearance in January, 1946, and it caught on from the start. It soon outstripped the other clerical magazines in circulation, attracting over eleven thousand subscribers.

A part of this success, of course, must be ascribed to its low subscription rate: it was two dollars a year, then (since raised to three), with half-price to seminarians. This was a figure far lower than that asked by the other clerical journals—but then, too, *The Priest* is a much less bulky magazine than these. It can afford to travel more cheaply.

The Priest is unique in its Correspondence Column, a department in which appeals are made for needy priests and other worthy causes, criticisms are leveled at articles previously published, and—occasionally—a letter is featured from some reader of *Our Sunday Visitor,* a letter with a point that might have interest for the clergy.

In 1948 the magazine began monthly publication of a cartoon by Harry Hasselberg, a Redemptorist priest. "Julie," it is called, and it knocks great sport out of the minor difficulties that arise between priest and housekeeper. A few—a very few—of the readers were outraged at what they interpreted as unbecoming levity in a clerical magazine. One or two went so far as to imagine that the enemies of the Church might capitalize on this poor homely housekeeper and our priests' sense of humor. These canceled their subscriptions. But by now "Julie" has become something of an institution in thousands of rectories all over the country—possibly the

most famous housekeeper in the history of the Church.

Another sore spot in the beginning was the matter of advertising. Like *Life, Time, The American Mercury,* and many other reviews, *The Priest* has its regular departments laced with advertising. A reader cannot get through "Correspondence," for instance, without taking in a few columns of advertising. This broke precedent. The other clerical magazines protect the reader by lumping such matter in the front and back so that he may skip it all with a minimum of inconvenience.

But the business and editorial departments of *The Priest* are entirely separate. It is a case here of the right hand not knowing what the left is up to. And it is better that way. Readers were a little bewildered some years back at seeing an editorial diatribe against electronic organs interrupted by a two-page spread advertising electronic organs. The editor hadn't anticipated such an ad, nor had the advertising manager anticipated such an article. Agonized letters came from the advertising manager to the editor. But the editor stood firm—and the manufacturer of synthetic organs canceled his advertising contract.

One of the most popular features of the magazine is a department known as "Currente Calamo," which might be translated freely as "just offhand." It is a mélange of comment on the passing parade, little items of satire and humor, special announcements of interest to priests, and the like. Although there are many who make a game of trying to fix the authorship of the column (it is unsigned), actually it is a sink for contributions by all the members of the staff, from Bishop Noll on down.

It was the editors' thought, in organizing the magazine, that here at last was a journal in which priests

could discuss their most intimate problems free from all eavesdropping on the part of the laity.

As things turned out, that proved to be nothing more than a pious hope. Letters of comment began coming in from druggists and theater managers, from nuns and housewives. Seminarians began sending *The Priest* home to their parents. Pastors turned it over to their sextons and housekeepers. With a twinge of regret, the staff was forced to decide that nothing might appear in the magazine that could not safely be announced to the public at large over a coast-to-coast network.

From the start, Bishop Noll has kept a keen interest in *The Priest.* Not one issue has ever fallen from the press without including one, two, sometimes even three of his articles. In one recent number, out of forty pages devoted to features, precisely twenty were contributed by Bishop Noll—this, mind you, over and above his constant work on pamphlets, and in addition to his weekly features for *Our Sunday Visitor.*

CHAPTER TWELVE

His Parish Property

STRANGE as it may strike one, publications have always been nothing more than a hobby in the life of the foremost Catholic publisher of our day. For Father Noll was primarily pastor of St. Mary's parish, Huntington, just as now he is primarily Bishop of Fort Wayne—and it were better for him before God that his whole printing plant fall in than that one of his parishioners die without the Sacraments through his neglect. His first concern has always been the shepherding of souls. He has never been without that immediate responsibility; first a congregation, later a diocese, seeking instruction and guidance at his hands.

Fortunately, he had grown accustomed to hard work—sixteen hours of it every day—so his parish never suffered because of the time he spent writing, examining manuscript contributions, answering the mail, etc.

After three hours at his down-town office, every school-day morning saw him in his school, where he took his place behind a desk to instruct the children in catechism. Most of his evenings were spent instructing converts in the front office of his house. At the same time, he conducted frequent lecture courses in his church for Catholics and non-Catholics.

The parish provided a complete high-school course for the girls, but only the eight elementary grades for the boys. When he approached the Sister Superior with the suggestion that she receive the boys into high school for at least a two-year course, he was embarrassed to find that her community rule would not admit an

exception. This meant a complete switch in the teaching personnel of the parish school. A different community agreed to take over the work for a complete high-school course, taking in both girls and boys.

It also necessitated enlarging the school. A drive for funds in the parish brought in $60,000, which, together with $80,000 already on hand, enabled him to add several classrooms and a gymnasium—all free of debt at the time of their completion.

As an instance of the problems that harry the Catholic pastor, Father Noll faced the need of revamping his heating plant. By some structural mistake, the church had only half as much radiation as was necessary to warm it properly, although it was served from a large boiler house. There were two furnaces under the school, one under the priest's house, and another under the convent—five boilers in all. It was just a little too much for one janitor. The poor fellow had to fire the church boiler all through Saturday night in order to raise the temperature to even as little as sixty degrees for the Sunday Masses.

In those days, Huntington had a large steam heating system, owned and operated by the same Fred Bippus from whom the priest had bought his printing plant. The only trouble was that its lines stopped at the foot of the hill on which St. Mary's Parish Plant was located. So Father Noll went to Mr. Bippus and begged him to bring his mains up the hill and connect the four parish buildings to his heating system.

The other members of the corporation objected, protesting the heavy cost of carrying the mains up the hill, but when the priest agreed to pay for that installation and take credit against it for the use of steam, the Board yielded.

The present-day visitor to Huntington can hardly visualize what the property surrounding St. Mary's Square looked like some forty years ago.

The Roche Family, principal benefactors of the parish—donors, indeed, of the church and the property on which it stood—had long had a large barn for horses, wagons, and a cow, on the present convent property. A nephew of the family, Patrick Gorman, had lived with them, and even after their death he continued to look after two large farms, one of which had been bequeathed to him and the other to St. Mary's Parish.

Since the Sisters were to take possession of the Roche home as a convent, Mr. Gorman built a home for himself and his wife next door—but the barn, the horses, the cattle, and the chicken-coop remained as eye-sores on the property.

The Sisters' convent was on the top of the hill facing Jefferson Street, but right back of it was a deep valley which Father Noll filled in by having a thousand loads of dirt hauled to the place. At that, he still had to terrace the east side of the convent property toward the filled-in lots.

Next, he put up a Lourdes Grotto just behind the convent, planting trees and shrubbery on what had formerly been the most desolate spot in Huntington's residential district, but which is now a beautiful city area.

During the first year of his paper's existence, Father Noll bought seven acres of ground outside of town at the intersection of the Big and Little Wabash rivers as a recreation center for his employees. Here he laid out a baseball diamond and, nearby, he had a swimming pool dug out, supplying it with water from a flowing well more than ninety feet deep.

He also built a cottage on the grounds and supplied his workers with boats and fishing tackle. They in turn built a stepping-stone bridge of rocks over one of the rivers from the country-club property nearby to their own peninsular playground.

But during the next year (1913) came that most memorable and devastating of all floods in northern Indiana, when the so-called Little and Big Wabash Rivers, running on either side of the property, rose up and washed away practically the whole thing.

2.

FATHER NOLL soon became a civic figure in Huntington—but because many people regarded *Our Sunday Visitor* as his personal property, it was often necessary for him to correct that impression. On one occasion, for instance, he saw that he had been elected President of the Home Savings & Loan Company. Needless to say, he had to refuse the honor.

A year or so after he came to Huntington, a few persons organized a *Cosmopolitan Club* whose membership was made up entirely of professional men—lawyers, physicians, school teachers, and two clergymen. Father Noll was elected secretary—which gave him a splendid opportunity of expounding good, sound philosophy. A paper was read by one of the members at every meeting, after which everyone present was invited to make some comment. But after all the others had finished, the secretary was able to criticize the views not only of the speaker but also of the critics.

It was in the same year that Rotary was introduced to Huntington, and Father Noll was asked to become a charter member. He accepted and attended its meetings quite regularly with the idea of becoming better

acquainted with the leading citizens of the city, most of whom had never had close contact with a priest. If some few of the members were a little distant at the start, it was not long before all of them became genuinely friendly not only to the priest personally, but to his Church as well.

When the Ku Klux Klan came to Huntington, for instance—as it came to practically every city in Indiana—a delegation of Rotarians called on Father Noll to assure him that not one of their members would affiliate with it or show any sympathy for it. They pledged themselves, instead, to creating a public scorn against it.

When Chesley Perry, the International Secretary of Rotary, once asked him to open a Salt Lake City Convention with prayer, the priest felt that he was too busy to make such a long trip for that one purpose; but since it was during the summer when he felt disposed to make his first trip west on a little vacation, he allowed himself to be persuaded.

In Salt Lake City, he stayed with the late Bishop Glass, who told him that he was probably the first priest in history to offer a prayer from the platform of the Mormon Tabernacle. Father Noll's answer was that "One is permitted to say a Catholic prayer anywhere, just as one may preach truth anywhere."

Attempts were made to organize Rotary in Mexico and Spain, but some of the Bishops in those countries were suspicious of the importation and reluctant to give it their blessing. That led the International Secretary to ask a letter of introduction from Father Noll for the men he was sending to those countries, as assurance that there was no anti-Catholicism in Rotary itself, no spirit of religious indifferentism—not, at least, in Huntington.

In Spain the organization had met with a little difficulty because some of those who joined it happened to be members of a secret society, then under the ban of the Church, but they were not selected because of that affiliation.

It was about this time that Father Noll, with his Bishop's consent, accepted an invitation to speak in Fort Wayne's First Presbyterian Church. The local pastor, later Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, had invited clergymen representing six or seven religious bodies, each to speak on the subject "Why I am a Methodist," "Why I am a Baptist," etc. The priest was to treat the subject "Why I am a Catholic."

Since it was so unusual for a priest to be speaking in a Protestant church, the auditorium could barely hold half of those who tried to get in. After his talk, then, he was asked by the minister if he couldn't come back the next Sunday for the benefit of those who had not been able to hear him the first time. He agreed to this return engagement, but on condition that he might treat a different subject: "What Catholcs Do Not Believe."

After this second talk, the minister told the priest how he wished that the clergy of his church and its members would stick to the definitions of belief contained in the Westminster Catechism, used in their Sunday Schools of the previous generation. He deplored the fact that several had recently been ordained to the Presbyterian ministry in New York—men who were not even convinced of Our Lord's Divinity, and hence not of His Resurrection.

"I have lived long enough," he said, "to see parishioners of mine, especially the older ones, lament the

rejection of one tenet of the faith after another—even by clergymen."

"When I attended Sunday School as a boy," another Presbyterian told him, "I had to study the Westminster Catechism, just as children of your Church must study the Catholic Catechism. But today it is no longer taught, because the Synods can't agree on what it teaches, and many of the beliefs I was taught as a child have been completely discarded."

Father Noll's relations with the Protestant laity of Huntington were always most cordial. Perhaps that was why he so regretted seeing one of the city's ministers transferred and replaced by a fire-eating anti-Catholic. Within a month after the person's arrival in town, he made a vicious attack on the Catholic Church in his adult Sunday-School class. One of the listeners told his Catholic wife of the "lambasting" her Church had received that morning at the hands of his preacher. She promptly carried this disturbing news to her pastor—who acted swiftly. He called in the local head of the Knights of Columbus and asked him to address a letter to each trustee of that church—a letter of protest that would say, in substance:

"We Catholics have always minded our own business here in Huntington. We have always worked hard to reduce misunderstandings and to promote civic harmony and religious tolerance. But your new minister, hardly acquainted in this community, seems determined to provoke trouble where none has existed."

As a result, the trustees of that parish met and served notice on their minister that his usefulness in Huntington was at an end—that if it was hard for him to be dismissed, he had only himself to blame.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Envelope System

IN 1916, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America formed a "Layman's Missionary Movement," one of whose first assignments was to develop a modern method of supporting not only the local church but the home and foreign missions as well. When the committee in charge reported back, they recommended that religion be supported by "installment" payments, much as credit-buying is arranged at the present time. They suggested the use of a *weekly* envelope through which support could be drawn even from non-practicing members. It was their idea that a carton, containing fifty-two bi-pocket envelopes be distributed among all persons holding at least nominal membership in Protestant parishes. Whether or not they attended church, they would be asked to contribute—fifty-two times, or quarterly, or in one lump—to the support of the parish church, the missions, and all the other pious causes of their respective denominations.

This came out as a press release. As soon as he saw it, Father Noll transferred the whole plan to Catholic financing and set about "selling" the pastors of the country on the new method.

But he meant to try it out first in his own parish, so he called a meeting of all the wage-earners and described the simplicity of the scheme. He told them that under the old system of pew rents, only the head of the family contributed to the local parish—an unfair arrangement, since the same family might include two or three unmarried wage-earners. It was hard for some people to pay their pew-rent all at one time—and many

of them could not afford to meet it even in quarterly payments.

Both pew rent and monthly collection could be done away with if all would agree to accept a certain quota and then pay it off in fifty-two equal installments. An unmarried wage-earner, for instance, would hardly think of contributing less than a nickel a day—which would amount to thirty-five cents each Sunday, or $18.20 a year; more generous, more able persons might be able to afford a dime a day; still others a quarter.

The parishioners of St. Mary's were enthusiastic. Pew rent and monthly collection were abolished. And still the little Sunday envelopes brought in twice and a half what the pew rent, monthly collection, and loose change contributed every Sunday had previously realized.

Excited by his discovery, Father Noll carried the news to Catholic pastors all over the country. Many of them thought that a weekly envelope collection would be too drastic an innovation, but gradually the system won its way until now it is followed almost universally in Catholic parishes.

To supply the many orders for envelopes flowing in as a result of his notice to the clergy, he had to install an entirely new department at his printing plant. This entailed a great deal of new machinery and taking on a few dozen new employees.

Secular firms immediately rushed in to fill the need, manufacturing and selling envelopes to Catholic pastors, in some instances under an assumed or ambiguously Catholic name. But to this day, the only large Catholic producer of weekly envelopes is Our Sunday Visitor, Incorporated.

As Bishop, the subject of our biography believes that the financing of all diocesan works, of the Missions, of the works of the Holy See, should be conducted in the same way. If Catholics in every diocese used the bi-pocket envelope, and gave their contribution for the parish church in one compartment and a smaller contribution in the other compartment for Peter's Pence, Diocesan Charities, the Missions, the Seminary, the Orphanage, the Catholic University and the diocesan paper, these causes would be supported in far greater measure without anyone feeling it. An average of 25c a week for all these purposes would amount to $13.00 a year for each individual. Since the average family counts 1.60 wage earners, each would contribute $22 per year. In a diocese containing 100,000 families, the returns would be $2,200,000. In a diocese counting 200,000 families, receipts would be nearly $5,000,000.

Under such a method of collecting a mite from every Catholic once a week, every cause of the Church, international, national, and diocesan, would be well supported, while the parish would receive its regular help—and more, because there would be no special extra-parish collections.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Victory Noll

THE Catholic Church in our country has always had to contend with a shortage of priests. It had been said that one soul is diocese enough for a Bishop. Even so, the general opinion is that a priest is overtaxed if he is responsible for more than a thousand people. Under the Sacramental system instituted by Christ, the laity—like children—must depend on their spiritual fathers for their principal means of grace: the Mass, the Real Presence, Holy Communion, forgiveness of sins, the last rites and the other Sacraments, together with the authoritative preaching of God's word.

In the early days of our national history, the proportion was about right: one priest to each thousand of the laity. But it was a day when Catholics were widely scattered and Fort Wayne belonged to the Archdiocese of Quebec. In 1790 there were thirty-four priests looking after 35,000 Catholics. By 1920, the number of the clergy had grown to 21,019, in charge of a Catholic population numbering about 20,000,000. The 1951 issue of *The Catholic Directory* lists a total Catholic population of 28,634,878 served by 43,889 priests—many of them occupied in colleges, universities, and seminaries, or following the contemplative life. In spite of the increase, the problem is still far from being solved, for many of those Catholics are settled sparsely throughout the south and southwest.

To help cope with that situation, Father Francis Clement Kelley, a Detroit priest, released to Chicago, who was to die as Bishop of Oklahoma City, had organized in 1905 the Catholic Church Extension Society, a Home Mission organization "for the purpose of building

chapels and schools, supplying church goods to mission churches, distributing Mass stipends to home missioners, providing subsidies for missionary priests, educating students for the missionary priesthood, fostering and extending the faith in the missionary districts of the United States and its dependencies." Father Noll had belonged to the Board of Governors of that Society almost from the beginning, and is now on its Executive Committee.

Extension, the organ of the Society, soon became one of the most widely circulated Catholic monthlies in the country—certainly through the literary and artistic endowments of its founder, the then Father Kelley—and the magazine, with its fund-raising appeals, was the main means of the Society's progress.

The group was able to put up and supply several hundred chapels in remote places. Where the people were too few to support a resident pastor, *Extension* used a railroad car, fitted it up as a chapel, and then pushed it from one community to another, in order that a priest might offer at least an occasional Mass and instruct the sadly neglected people.

It was only natural, then, that Father Noll and Father Kelley should have become the warmest of friends. Beyond the fact that Chicago is Fort Wayne's center of gravity, so to speak, there was the additional consideration that Father Kelley saw in Father Noll a man much like himself—a whirlwind of energy directed quite entirely to works of zeal, and possessed of a medium capable of rendering invaluable assistance to the new Mission Society.

In his editorial position, Father Noll was becoming one of the best informed priests in the country. He enjoyed the confidence of practically the entire American hierarchy, who appreciated his good judgment and were relieved to see so necessary a work being accomplished

with such competence. He had received letters of appreciation from the Holy Father, Cardinal Gibbons, the Apostolic Delegate, Cardinals O'Connell and Farley, Mundelein and Hayes and practically every other mitred head in the country.

And a large part of his work at the office consisted in reading confidential letters from subscribers, smoothing over the difficulties of disgruntled parishioners, trailing ex-priests, bogus or otherwise, and works of similar delicacy.

Besides, living in the spirit of evangelical poverty, he could be absolutely detached—altruistic—in the disposition of the funds accruing from his publications.

In 1920, then, Father Kelley, together with Archbishop Mundelein of Chicago, approached Father Noll with the proposition of founding a Home Mission Seminary near Huntington. Its function would be to prepare students for the priesthood—not for the Fort Wayne Diocese, but for all the mission territory within the United States. Its proximity to *Our Sunday Visitor* was not coincidence. Father Kelley knew that the publication, together with *Extension,* would certainly underwrite the expenses.

After talking the matter over with his Bishop, Father Noll agreed. Just west of Huntington, he found a 135-acre farm for sale—a beautiful property on a hill overlooking the Wabash Valley: an ideal spot for a seminary. It was bought in the name of *Our Sunday Visitor.*

But interest in this apostolic project began to dwindle. A majority of the Bishops who were to benefit by the foundation gave the matter a long second thought and then vetoed it for the following reasons:

If the Church were to make progress in such areas as Utah, New Mexico, and Arizona, they thought, it should be staffed by "home-grown" priests— men who

could speak with the local twang, familiar with the mentality of the population and accustomed to the rigors of extreme temperatures and loneliness. The original idea had been to recruit vocations in the east—in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, for instance—train them in Huntington, and then send them west; but there they would have something of the character of an immigrant clergy. So the project was dropped.

2.

Three years after Father Noll had purchased the farm as a site for a Home Mission Seminary, he visited St. Joseph Sanitarium, Hot Springs, Arkansas, and during his stay there was asked by the resident pastor to preach at his Sunday High Mass. The priest agreed to do this, and after the Mass a gentleman who had been a policeman in Chicago for many years, and upon retirement moved to Long Beach, California, called on him to ask for an interview some time in the afternoon. Father Noll cheerfully accorded this interview. It seems that the gentleman was now wealthy, and it was his purpose to induce the editor of *Our Sunday Visitor* to do almost the same thing Father Kelley wanted: to establish a training school for missionaries to work in the same mission field, covering the entire west and southwest. But Mr. O'Donnell wanted a religious community of women to be founded by Father Noll for this purpose.

In his new home at Long Beach, Peter O'Donnell—for that was his name—was surprised to find thousands of Mexicans for whom there was no room in parochial schools. He had observed that in the city of Los Angeles—only forty miles distant—there were 150,000 of them, and that they were scattered all over the southern part of his state.

When Father Noll asked him why he looked to him for the launching of that enterprise, his answer was that it had to become a large community, to be recruited rapidly and that *Our Sunday Visitor,* which had subscribers in every state of the nation, was the best medium of publicity for the securing of vocations.

If the priest would take the initiative in starting such a community, if he would erect a motherhouse, novitiate, and training school at Huntington, Mr. O'Donnell would contribute $50,000 towards the cost. Father Noll observed that while he had the inclination he hardly had the time to devote to the furthering of such a movement.

But over in Chicago, there was a frail little priest in the first years of his ministry who, because of delicate health, had been appointed chaplain at St. Bernard's Hospital, Englewood—John J. Sigstein. Like many a great soul, Father Sigstein compensated for his life of confinement by a flaming zeal for a more active apostolate. At ordination, he had received the charge to "Go and teach," and it was constantly on his mind. He saw the leakage caused by the lack of instruction in public-school children and in the children of immigrants scattered through the more remote sections of the country.

To help remedy the situation, he decided to organize a community of women—a sisterhood—dedicated principally to the instruction of Mexican children in the southwest. Although he was only a poor hospital chaplain, without funds or influence, he put his plan under the patronage of Our Lady of Victory and began the work of organization.

On All Saints Day in 1915, he had called together the "Society of Missionary Helpers of Our Blessed Lady of Victory," a group of men and women devoted to the assistance of needy missions wherever they should be

found. These people would collect discarded vestments and church furnishings of every description. These they would repair and refurbish and then ship to needy missionaries.

It was from this group that Father Sigstein recruited the first two members for his new community, "The Society of Missionary Catechists." They had been promised to Bishop Wehrle of Bismarck, North Dakota, who had advised and encouraged Father Sigstein from the start. But with apostolic generosity, good Bishop Wehrle relinquished his claim on the two Catechists when he heard of the serious conditions prevalent in New Mexico and the grave danger of losing whole families to the Faith—families that had been Catholic for generations; so the first Catechists found themselves at work in Watrous, a town of the Sante Fé Archdiocese. That was in 1922.

At first Father Sigstein thought that a group of Catechists should be able to accomplish their mission within a year. Twelve months should be long enough, he thought, not only to get everyone instructed for First Holy Communion and Confirmation; it should allow time enough for the training of well-disposed people to take over after the Catechists had left.

But it did not work out that way. The Catechists very soon found, and reported back to Father Sigstein, that it takes much longer than a year to train a competent lay-teacher of religion.

Father Noll thought now of Father Sigstein and his little community, and he proposed to Mr. O'Donnell that he call on that priest. But the man was not too much interested because fixed in his mind was the idea that the new sisterhood should have its training school in Huntington, and that *Our Sunday Visitor* should sponsor it and build it up. Thereupon Father Noll asked him

whether he would have any objection if, on his return home, he stopped to confer with Father Sigstein about moving his few Postulants to Huntington. Mr. O'Donnell's reaction was: "I have no objection, but you must get behind it if it is to become big enough to service the immense field which is awaiting it."

On his way back to Huntington, the priest called at St. Bernard's Hospital, Chicago, to tell Father Sigstein what was in Mr. O'Donnell's mind, and apprise him that he (Father Noll) would carry out Mr. O'Donnell's wish if the few Postulants, then living with the School Sisters of Notre Dame at their Academy at Longwood, Chicago, could be transferred to a novitiate at Huntington.

Of course Father Sigstein was surprised. He saw the hand of God in the proposal, but he also wondered how he could move with these Postulants, since he was affiliated with the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Father Noll then employed a Chicago architect to design a building of Spanish-type construction to be erected on the spot previously selected for the Home-Mission Seminary. This structure was started in the fall of 1923 and finished in the late spring of 1925. In the meantime, publicity was carried through *Our Sunday Visitor* so that when the building was dedicated on July 5, 1925, more than a dozen young women were moved in. Cardinal Mundelein had already given his consent to release Father Sigstein to the Diocese of Fort Wayne.

Our Sunday Visitor immediately began beating the drum for the Catechists. To this day, hardly an issue of the paper goes to press without some notice soliciting candidates for the Society, with the result that its membership has increased from the original two to some 350 members, including Novices and Postulants from practically every state in the Union.

Until 1938, the Society existed as a purely diocesan community. Canon Law provides that such groups must get along through a number of years' probation, taking temporary rather than perpetual vows, before the Holy See will examine and approve its rule of life.

But in that year, Pope Pius XI granted recognition of the group as a regular religious community with the right to admit members under perpetual vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

A candidate spends ten months as a Postulant, two years as a Novice, and then takes perpetual vows only after six years of trial under temporary vows. It was thought advisable, too, to change the name from Missionary "Catechists" to Missionary "Sisters," since the word "Catechist" does not imply the religious character of the group. This was done in 1947.

The habit of the Community is rather modern in its way. The members wear a simple dark blue serge dress, gathered with a sash at the waist and falling to their ankles. It is set off by stiff-starched white cuffs and a collar. Around their neck and on a long chain, they wear the large silver medal of Our Lady of Victory. And, unlike most Sisters, they do not cut their hair. Instead, it is gathered under a simple coif with a veil that hangs down their back.

There is far greater demand for these good women than the community is able to supply. They now have fifty thousand public school children under instruction. It is their procedure to establish themselves at some town which they use as a center in taking care of the Catholics scattered in some twenty or thirty nearby towns and villages. In moving into a place, they first visit every home in the area—Catholic or otherwise—to locate all the available children and give their parents a little fervorino on the necessity of a Catholic education. This

is followed by other visits to the homes with a view to bringing the parents themselves out to Mass and the Sacraments. In that way they are able to get not only the children but the parents with them. In fact, they have been instrumental in gathering together enough families in many places to start new parishes.

On Sunday they look after the children at Mass, play the organ for the priest, take care of his societies and sodalities of women, take charge of the Girl Scouts, and make themselves generally helpful in whatever way they can.

These Sisters enjoy the rare distinction of having visited every single home in the State of Nevada! From their notes, they were able to cull the name and address of every person who is or should be Catholic—information which they turned over to the Bishop of Reno.

At present they are at work in the Dioceses of San Diego, Los Angeles, and Monterey-Fresno in California; in three centers in Nevada; two in the Diocese of Salt Lake; four in Denver; several in Santa Fé, Amarillo, San Antonio; one in Tucson and Mobile; they are in the Archdiocese of Detroit, in the Dioceses of Toledo, Covington, Columbus and Trenton. They have eight centers in the Diocese of Fort Wayne. For several years they have been in the Canal Zone, directing the formation of a similar community. They are doing the same in Detroit, forming young women to work among Negroes.

New Mexico is their oldest theater of operations. Until a few years ago, they worked there without receiving a penny for their services—not even for railroad fare, automobile, or gasoline. It is estimated that in this way they made a contribution of at least $150,000 to three successive Archbishops of that State.

Bishop Noll uses the Missionary Sisters in six parts

of his diocese where Catholics are few. They have twice as many children under instruction in those fields as the local pastors had ever supposed were available. In visiting every home in the city of South Bend, they discovered several thousand lapsed Catholics and hundreds of invalid marriages, children whose religious upbringing was being neglected, and Catholics who had missed Confirmation.

Until very recently, the Sisters in the field received a monthly salary barely sufficient to cover the cost of their absolute needs. They must have one or more automobiles in every center, and all Sisters are good drivers.

Since more than ninety of these Sisters work in California, *Our Sunday Visitor* bought them a large western center at Redlands. The building was built along the Old San Gabriel Mission lines, with two church towers. It is surrounded by acres of orange trees. The Sisters call it "The Queen of the Missions," and it is there that ninety California Sisters make their annual retreat and take a little rest during August of each year.

Father Sigstein continued as superior of the community until 1939, when the Sisters were authorized to elect their own Superior General and Council. This automatically released him from his position as Director. The priest, in poor health, returned to Chicago, where the Cardinal permits him the privilege of a home altar.

Our Sunday Visitor continues through the years as "big brother" and financial angel of the Missionary Sisters. Each year the corporation foots a bill in the neighborhood of $20,000 toward the maintenance of "Victory Noll," as Father Sigstein named the Motherhouse—which means that, from 1924, with improvements and additions to the physical property, an aggregate contribution of almost a million dollars has been made.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

New Horizons

IN 1918, Bishop Alerding received a letter from Father Kelley of Chicago, founder of the Catholic Church Extension Society. It was this priest's thought that Father Noll should be made a Domestic Prelate. *Our Sunday Visitor* and its editor enjoyed national prestige—indeed, had dug their way into the hearts of Catholics all over the country. The little paper at the church door Sunday mornings was becoming almost a standard part of the Sunday program everywhere. Besides, in his capacity as editor Father Noll was constantly interviewing and corresponding with professional and business leaders, with persons interested in the Catholic Faith. The title with the purple would add to his stature.

Bishop Alerding immediately visited Father Noll and told him of Father Kelley's suggestion.

"I'll be delighted to carry that request to the Holy See—that is, if it suits you," he said.

But at the time, there was only one Monsignor in the diocese—the late John Oechtering, then serving as Vicar General. And Father Noll, a much younger man, was not inclined to accept an honor that would rank him ahead of all his brother priests.

A few years later, though, the Bishop decided to go ahead with the proposal, and this time he did not make the mistake of consulting the priest. Father Noll was simply told that he had been appointed a Domestic Prelate with the title of Right Reverend Monsignor.

By now—1921—Father Kelley was a Monsignor himself, and it was he who preached the sermon at Monsignor Noll's investiture. Also present was Archbishop

Moeller of Cincinnati, together with Bishop Alerding and several other Bishops and Prelates.

2.

ON the occasion of his Silver Jubilee in the priesthood, June, 1923, Monsignor Noll was presented with the first radio to come to Huntington. He had previously owned a Marconi wireless set, by which he had been able to receive signals and news in the Morse code. But now this was stored in the attic.

There were very few broadcasting stations at the time, but one powerful station in Chicago and another in Pittsburgh came in quite clearly. It was such a novelty that during the long summer evenings he used to open the windows in his front room and, with the megaphone plugged in, let the music go out to the neighbors on their front porches for blocks around.

A more substantial jubilee gift was a European tour presented by *Our Sunday Visitor*. The terms of the offer were simple: the company would pay all expenses for the editor and a traveling companion. There was only one condition: it had to be a *protracted* tour.

He could not break away just then, but in January of the next year he reserved space on a French liner for himself and his cousin, Father Raymond R. Noll of Indianapolis, now a Prothonotary Apostolic and Vicar General of the Archdiocese.

New York was in the grip of a blizzard when the two cousins arrived. The next morning they were told that their ship was in trouble and was not expected to dock for several days—that even when it did dock, it would be held up several days for repairs.

What to do? Father Noll happened to think of a certain Mr. Lilly, a warm friend of his paper, in the shipping business. Mr. Lilly told the priests that he

thought he could switch their reservations to the *Conte Verde,* leaving next morning. This meant that they would have to get visas that very afternoon for all the countries they intended to visit.

Fortunately, the Nolls were stopping with Monsignor Evers, pastor of St. Andrew's Church and chaplain, at the time, of the New York Police Force. He had the services of a police car and a chauffeur at his disposal.

This Monsignor Evers, by the way, was the first in New York to schedule a "Printers' Mass" at 1:30 Sunday morning. There were a number of large printing plants publishing the metropolitan dailies, in the vicinity of St. Andrew's—just opposite City Hall, and near the Brooklyn Bridge—and the Sunday-morning edition of the papers kept thousands of printers, pressmen, and other workers at their job Saturdays until after midnight. The Catholics among them had to go home, often for only a few hours of rest, before they had to be up again for Mass. So Monsignor Evers applied for permission to provide a Mass for them at 1:30.

The Monsignor had once asked Father Noll to come to New York and talk at this Mass—as a printer to printers. Father Noll agreed in a rather indefinite way, but it was hardly a month before he had a telegram from Monsignor Evers, telling him that he had made three commitments for him: he was to preach at the Printers' Mass in the morning; he was to address the seminarians at Dunwoodie in the afternoon; and he was to preach at Tombs Prison the next morning.

It was a heavy assignment, but Father Noll enjoyed it immensely. The church was packed with an attentive congregation of newspapermen. In his announcements before the sermon, Monsignor Evers reminded them that St. Andrew's distributed a thousand copies of *Our*

Sunday Visitor each week. How could Father Noll fail to preach with unction in such a parish?

The late Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York, was present for the address at Dunwoodie; and at the Tombs, the prisoners overflowed from the nave of the chapel into the sanctuary.

This was the same Monsignor Evers who now put a police car at the disposal of his guests. With screaming siren and screeching brakes they hustled from place to place accomplishing their business until, at supper that evening, they were able to show their host visas from the Consulates of France, Switzerland, Italy, England, Scotland, Ireland, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Spain, Morocco, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Turkey, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia.

3.

THE priests took the southern route to Gibraltar on the Mediterranean, and from there they crossed over to Tangier in Morocco, where Monsignor Denning was stationed as Consul General. Harding was President at the time, and Monsignor Denning was from Marion, Ohio, the President's home town. Monsignor Denning had ten consuls working under him until the country was placed under an international government.

Monsignor Noll had got in touch with Monsignor Denning by cable from Spain. The Monsignor happened to be sick in bed, so he deputed two Moorish policemen, tall and grave, to meet the boat and bring his guests to his home. These two policemen served as bodyguards to the visitors throughout several days, showing them around and, of course, attracting no small attention from the natives—somewhat to the embarrassment of the American tourists.

Returning to Spain, the Nolls were taken by means

of a motor-boat to a ship anchored in mid-channel, carrying the American flag, placed at Monsignor Denning's disposal by the United States Government. Monsignor Denning also cabled the American Consul at Cadiz to meet the priests at the pier and help them get good reservations for their stay.

Arriving at the hotel shortly before the evening meal, they found that their coming had been announced. The orchestra, in fact, was all primed and ready with a tune they thought the Americans would appreciate: "Yes, We Have No Bananas."

In all his tours, Monsignor Noll was far more than a sight-seer. As a journalist, of course, he was interested in every human activity, in savoring the intellectual climate of every country he visited; but as a churchman he was far more interested in the relation between the prevailing religion and the economic and cultural life of the peoples among whom he found himself. He insisted on interviewing the Bishops and heads of Catholic institutions; he talked with our American representatives and with local government officials. He chatted with bellboys and hotel managers.

"Europe was just beginning to recover from the effects of World War I," he recalls, "and many American reporters and editors then, as now, made flying trips for the purpose of gathering information to relay to the readers of their papers or periodicals. But usually they contacted only the government in power, which gave a very one-sided and wholly inaccurate picture of conditions.

"On the other hand," he says, "I visited those countries with a printed questionnaire, which I carried to Bishops and heads of educational and other institutions to fill out. I was never quite satisfied with one report.

Hence I brought the same questionnaire to different parties to comment on the report of the first one I interviewed. Understand that the people whom I inteviewed had lived in their respective countries all their lives. They knew backgrounds and had witnessed transitions.

"Much of the information thus gathered I embodied in the report on various countries in my *Catholic Facts*—which, by the way, went through many editions with a total circulation of more than 100,000. There is still a live demand for this book, although it is temporarily suspended because of the fluid situation in those nations due to World War II, and the ever-expanding influence of the Bolsheviks.

"Needless to say, the rulers of many countries were Freemasons of the Grand Orient type—hardly the ones from whom to secure information. Yet most emissaries of our government to those same countries visited none other than the politicians. It was usually announced in the papers that the gentleman was coming to their country—and he would be met at the boat by representatives of the government in power and seldom got out of their hands.

"Mr. Joseph Kennedy, our Ambassador to England, told me in person, for instance, that even the late Wendell Willkie, when he visited London, could not escape the politicians, that he interviewed only the people to whom they directed him so that he would bring home a report favorable concerning their government.

"And then think of Douglas Fairbanks, a non-Catholic and a divorcee, sent as good-will emissary to Latin America!

"I believe that the information I gathered has been very helpful in correcting erroneous ideas spread through the columns of the American press."

4.

MONSIGNOR NOLL found the Europe of 1924 in that malaise that was to culminate in a second world war. Fascism was already well established in Italy, Communism was consolidating its conquest of Russia, and Hitler was getting a start in Germany.

"In those countries which participated most actively in the war," he reported to the readers of *Our Sunday Visitor*, "the poor have become destitute, the middle classes poor, while the rich, in many instances, have grown richer."

He and his companion toured Spain by private automobile—Seville, Madrid, Granada, Cordoba, and Toledo.

"The educational opportunities are fair," he noted, "but the public-school system itself is nothing like our own. There are excellent private schools to which the middle class and the aristocracy send their children. There are simply not enough religious to staff private schools for all the children of that country."

From Spain they crossed the Pyrennees to Lourdes, thence to Marseilles, and thence to Genoa where they took ship for Egypt. They had reservations up the Nile to the tomb of "King Tut," recently discovered, but were dissuaded from going by returning tourists who told them they would be all but eaten alive by insects. The King's tomb, now empty, looked no different from the many they had seen near Memphis—and, anyway, the contents of the tomb had been moved to the Museum in Cairo, which they visited.

They witnessed an anti-British demonstration in front of their hotel, where a British pilgrimage was housed. The late Cardinal Bourne was leading a group of some thirty Bishops and priests, and about ninety lay

people to the Holy Land. The disturbance had been arranged "in his honor."

"A train leaves Cairo every morning for Jerusalem during the tourist season," Monsignor Noll told his readers, "and the trip is made in about fifteen hours." He was on one of those trains, through Port Said.

In Palestine, "The Mohammedans number nearly 600,000 out of a total population of 760,000, and they are more anti-Hebrew than anti-Christian . . . The Mohammedan is not pleased with the present heavier burden of taxation under the British Mandate, nor with the prestige gained by his Hebrew business competitor. According to the latest report, the Jews number about 80,000 or eleven percent of the population. The Christian-Orthodox Greeks, Armenians, and Roman Catholics total about 75,000, or ten percent of the population."

(Of course, Palestine's population is now headed for the 2,000,000 mark, due to the homeland provided for Jews under the Israeli government.)

Regarding the Armenians, he found that while before the war, there had been 3,500,000 of them, in 1924 there were only 2,000,000. The rest were dead of violence or starvation. Every Catholic Armenian Bishop and priest who had not run for his life had been killed.

In Jerusalem, Monsignor Noll was handed a telegram from the Archbishop of Constantinople, then at Athens, expressing regret that he would not be able to meet him in person. However, the Papal Delegate would meet him at the pier.

After a fortnight of pilgrimage in Jerusalem and its environs, Monsignor Noll and his cousin engaged an automobile with an Arab dragoman for the drive to Nazareth, about ninety miles north; thence to Cana; thence to Tiberias, where they stopped with the Francis-

can Fathers on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. They were to cross that Sea the day after their arrival, but it was as much disturbed as it must have been at the time Christ had to still its waves. The water was leaping over the shore line to a distance of two hundred feet. But a day later, the Sea was fairly calm and the little party could cross to Capharnaum, where they saw the ruins of the synagogue built by the Jews' friend described to Our Lord as being so friendly to the Jewish People. It must have been a huge structure, built of stone, but later destroyed by an earthquake. It was in this synagogue that Christ delivered the great Eucharistic Discourse recorded in the Sixth Chapter of St. John's Gospel.

From there, Monsignor Noll drove to Damascus in Syria, where he remained a whole week. More than three hundred mosques in the city were abundant evidence of a tight Moslem control. But he found that high wall still standing—the wall over which St. Paul was lowered in a basket. The place where Ananias baptized St. Paul is now used as a chapel. Since he had been born on the feast of the great saint's conversion, Monsignor Noll said Mass there.

Curiously, the principal street of the city is still named "Straight," as it was when St. Luke mentioned it in his Acts of the Apostles.

Leaving Damascus, the party drove over Mount Lebanon, stopping at the ruined second-century city of Hierapolis and marveling at the majestic remains of the buildings. The walks were built of huge stones, piled one on top of another, and each weighing more than five hundred tons. How the ancients lifted those stones is still a mystery.

After Mount Lebanon came Beirut, and then Con-

stantinople. By coincidence, when they left Beirut for Constantinople, they found that they were with the British pilgrimage, headed for the same destination.

At Constantinople the Papal Delegate was on hand, all right—but with some little embarrassment, Monsignor Noll told him not to bother about him—to look after Cardinal Bourne and the Bishops in his entourage.

"Not a bit of it," said the Delegate. "My instructions were that I should meet Monsignor Noll—and here I am!"

It was from him that he learned that Archbishops Hayes of New York and Mundelein of Chicago had been raised to the Cardinalate, and that they were probably in Rome at that very moment.

Those were the days when Mustapha Kemal Pasha was rising to power and the government had just been moved from Constantinople to Ankara. The new nationalism was expressing itself in a hatred for religion generally. Friday had long been the Moslem day of rest and all businesses were ordered to operate on Sunday. This was a tragic development for the 20,000 Uniate Greeks of Constantinople.

Monsignor Noll was especially interested in investigating the charge of discrimination made against the Near East Relief Association which had been the beneficiary of huge sums donated by charitable Americans. And he found that the charge was not without foundation. It so happened that the social workers employed by Near East were preachers in most instances, and the local Catholic clergy complained that the Armenians, who are in union with Rome, got scarcely any help. On the other hand, the Catholic Bishop of Constantinople said that he had little reason to complain about the conduct of the Near East in his diocese.

5.

IN Constantinople, Monsignor Noll and his cousin were the guests of five diocesan priests, living a sort of community life under Bishop George Calavassy, who had been charged by Pope Benedict with the delicate mission of trying to bring the Catholic Faith into closer contact with the Orthodox Churches in Turkey and Greece.

Constantinople had always had a considerable number of Uniate Greeks, but divine services were conducted in the Latin Rite with the result that there was very little hope of making any converts from the ranks of the schismatics, who disliked the Latin people more than their religion. Hence Bishop Calavassy was ordered to have all the Greek priests adopt the Greek Rite for the Mass; and he began his work by building a high school in the heart of Para, the Christian section of the city, open to all Greeks, whether Uniates or Orthodox. Five self-sacrificing Greek priests assumed professorships, assisted by several lay teachers.

It was a success from the start, but the end of the first World War brought a million refugees into the city so that the Bishop and his faculty had to turn their attention to relief work. The Christian nations sent little help to the Turks or to the Uniates. The Orthodox fared far better. But the limited means dispensed by Bishop Calavassy went to Orthodox and Uniates without distinction, so that the whole city became deeply attached to their benefactor.

At the time of his visit, Monsignor Noll found Bishop Calavassy's school prospering, with more than 310 Orthodox pupils registered, despite the fact that their parents had been excommunicated by the Orthodox Church for permitting them to attend the Catholic school.

Owing to the determination of Turkey to check the work of all Christians, Bishop Calavassy later moved his establishment to Athens, where he founded a similar school—aided in large measure by the publicity and fund-raising carried on in his behalf throughout the United States by Monsignor Barry Doyle, formerly an English army chaplain.

The Nolls were particularly edified by the fine spirit of their host and his faculty. Secular priests though they were, they were leading a community life in the manner of religious, and working with absolutely no remuneration. They offered their Masses for intentions supplied by the Bishop, allowing him to keep the stipends toward the promotion of his work.

Bishop Calavassy knew of no other way of bringing back the Greek Schismatics than by coming into close contact with the rising generation.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

New Horizons (II)

FROM Constantinople, Msgr. Noll and his cousin went north through the Balkans—through Bulgaria and Yugoslavia—entering Italy at Trieste. From there they went on down through Venice, Genoa, Milan, and Florence, arriving in Rome during Holy Week.

Cardinal Mundelein arranged a private audience with Pope Pius XI for them, and as soon as Msgr. Noll entered the throne-room, he was delighted at being met by the Holy Father with the question:

"How is *Our Sunday Visitor* getting along?"

The two priests also saw the new American Cardinals—Mundelein and Hayes—dedicate the Recreation Centers for Italian Youth put up near St. Peter's by the American Knights of Columbus. The Knights had been asked to start their work mainly because the Holy Father knew that they had charge of such work during the War, and that the Y.M.C.A. intended to remain on the job in Rome after the War. This occasioned the report in this country that the Knights were spending $1,000,000 to drive the Methodists out of Rome.

The story has probably never been published that Ed Hearn, who had at one time been Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus in the United States, and who at this time was supervising their recreational work in the Holy City, became a bosom friend of Pope Pius XI, and was frequently invited to spend a half hour or so with the Holy Father in his own apartments after the close of his heavy day's work. Pope Pius wanted to dedicate the two buildings in person—one for boys and one for girls, so close to St. Peter's.

This was before the Concordat entered with Mussolini, when it was the policy of the Holy Father not to leave the Vatican, not to set foot on extra-territorial property. The Pope even consulted with Cardinal Gasparri about it, and only the night before the dedication did the Pope send word to Mr. Hearn that he would have the two American Cardinals, who were then present in Rome, each dedicate one of the buildings. Monsignor Noll and his cousin were present at the ceremony, which was attended by a great many of the highest dignitaries in Rome.

Msgr. Noll was a little surprised at the extent of Protestant activities in this world-center of Catholicism, so he took copious notes on the situation as an answer to those who might contend that Protestantism lacks freedom where Catholicism prevails.

He found the Waldensians, the only native Protestant sect in Italy, with two churches in Rome and a theological seminary. The Lutherans had one church, the Presbyterians one, the Episcopalians three, but—as he noted—"they attend to their own business."

The American Methodists and Baptists, however, while having only two churches with a very small following, were very aggressive and openly offensive to the Catholics—so much so that they elicited rebukes from the daily press.

They had schools and a theological seminary in Rome—the Baptists also supporting an orphanage and a large school for girls—the Crandon Institute, named after its founder. The Methodists had a sort of hostelry for young people, and an institute for young women, the gift of a Mrs. Sheppard Gould.

Over in this country the report had got about that the Methodists had built a huge college on a hill over-

looking the Vatican. Msgr. Noll had checked the facts and scotched the notion in *Our Sunday Visitor,* whereupon the Masonic *New Age* and many Protestant sectarian papers had called him a liar—so while he was here on the ground, he determined to make a first-hand investigation.

Together with Father O'Neill (the Paulist pastor of Santa Susanna), an Irish Christian Brother, and the architect of the K. of C. recreation buildings, he drove up to Monte Mario, reputed site of the school. There he found nothing more than a large house where a few boys, chiefly from the Balkans, were being trained for the ministry at American expense. The architect called on the head of the house and asked when he intended to build. It developed that he had not the slightest intention of expanding. There was danger of the ground sliding, he said.

The architect also took a snapshot of the little place. Msgr. Noll sent this back to *Our Sunday Visitor* for a cut, together with an article pointing out that his accusers were the ones who were falsifying. Their picture of the "Methodist College in Rome" was nothing more than a sketch that had never got beyond the dream stage.

In fact, Msgr. Noll concluded, despite fifty years of effort on the part of the Protestants in Rome, the total number of Methodists, Baptists, Anglicans, Lutherans, and Presbyterians came to less than four thousand—and included in that number were many non-Romans.

In 1924, it seemed to him that everyone with a sincere interest in the country was behind Mussolini, and business was practically unanimous in supporting him. Nevertheless, he wrote, "while Mussolini's heart is with the Catholic Church, and while he has introduced

religion into the primary schools, restored the crucifix to public buildings, and has repeatedly declared that Italy owes nearly all that she has to the Catholic Church, and needs that Church today, there has been no effort on the part of the Pope or the Hierarchy to line up the people for him. In fact," he noted, "what remained of the so-called Catholic party—the Popolare—withheld its support from him."

He was deeply impressed by the spirit of poverty animating the Roman churchmen.

"Those who believe that the Pope and Cardinals possess great wealth would quickly change their minds if they only started a little personal investigation," he wrote. "Because he was called on to administer so much charity, Pope Benedict XV was probably the recipient of more money than any other Pope in history up to that time; yet when he died there was not sufficient money in the Papal Treasury to hold a conclave for the election of his successor. Pope Pius promptly passes on to various works of charity and religion whatever cash is sent to him.

"Most of the Cardinals of Rome have such small incomes that they are no longer able to observe the etiquette and forms prescribed for members of their rank. Many of them live on the fourth and fifth floors of apartment buildings, and despite their age must go up and down four or five flights of stairs when they go to and from their quarters. They don't have elevators."

2.

AFTER several weeks in Rome, the two priests headed north, traveling through the Alps to Innsbruck in the Tyrol, where they visited the famous seminary and interviewed various members of the faculty in filling out Msgr. Noll's questionnaire.

On their way to Vienna, the two of them shared a compartment on the train and, in typically American fashion, Msgr. Noll made himself comfortable by propping up his feet on the opposite bench. The conductor not only made him put his feet on the floor but reported him to the police. He was "tried" and fined 10,000 crowns for having violated the law of the land. The priest was somewhat alarmed until a little calculation showed him that the fine was the equivalent of fifteen American pennies.

Austria was just struggling to its feet after the War. President Heinisch and his Chancellor, Msgr. Ignaz Seipel, were doing their best to hold the government together in the face of constant and bitter opposition from the Socialists and Communists. Despite their poverty, the Austrians were caring for thousands of undernourished German children. On the day he arrived at Innsbruck, for instance, Msgr. Noll found the station thronged with fifteen hundred youngsters just arrived from Germany for distribution among as many homes, where they were to have the best attention for four weeks; and these fifteen hundred were only replacing fifteen hundred others, and so on back over a period of a year. Vienna was receiving a quota of thirty-five hundred children every four weeks, in the same way.

Regarding education, "The Social Democrats have done their best to have religion excluded from the schools," he noted, "but without success. The movement against religious education in the schools of Vienna began twenty years ago in the ranks of Freemasonry, which has been back of a similar program throughout Europe, just as the Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite is behind such a movement in our country."

After a few days in Vienna, the Fathers Noll went

to Germany, starting at Munich and heading north through the occupied territory as far as Muenster, stopping at Augsburg, Wuerzburg, Nuernberg, Darmstadt, Frankfurt, Mainz, Wiesbaden, Fulda, Koblenz and Duesseldorf. The Monsignor was carrying Mass intentions to the Bishops in most of those places and so he had an opportunity to visit with them and talk over the religious, political, social, and educational situation in their dioceses. He had an especially long and satisfying visit with the late Cardinal Schulte of Cologne.

"The antics of the mark in 1924 were enough to drive the people mad," he reported. "There was no incentive to work, much less to save. Those who did work made haste to convert their money into some commodity at once for fear the mark would have less than one-half today's value on the morrow. Hence the poor, the working people generally, were necessarily destitute. The middle class had become poor by the loss of all interest on whatever investments it had made, and by losing at least 75% of the principal, because no one expects to recover more than 25% of pre-war invested capital."

It was a frightening situation—one which was in no wise underestimated by Msgr. Noll's German informants.

"The political agitators have done much to divide the people of Germany," he wrote, "and there, as in any other country, it is a case of 'divided we fall.' In Bavaria, the monarchistic spirit is very dominant, while in Prussia the people are not only for monarchy, but are to a great degree Communistic.

"The Bavarians, who, left to themselves, would be quite placid and religious, have been stirred up by Hitler and Ludendorff. Ludendorff, the Prussian, the

anti-Catholic, unwelcome in his own home, has moved into the heart of Bavaria, which is Catholic, and there has launched a bitter attack against the Catholic Church and her Cardinal at their very door . . .

"On last New Year's Day the Cardinal of Munich preached a sermon in behalf of peace and forgiveness. In his sermon he declared that 'even the Jews should have justice,' and that 'the sinking of the Lusitania was unfortunate in its effects.'

"Then Ludendorff and his followers were quick to charge the Cardinal with saying something entirely different. They accused him of defending the Jew, against whom there is considerable feeling, and of criticizing the war-policy of the government."

Here follows Msgr. Noll's analysis of the political situation:

"In an anti-Catholic campaign, Ludendorff and Hitler are united, though they are otherwise promoters of different programs. Ludendorff is working for the return of the Hohenzollern to power, while Hitler has a Nationalist patriotic program of the Ku Klux Klan type. The Bavarians would welcome a local King, because they lived and prospered under the rule of King Ludwig III. They care little who is at the head of Germany as a whole. The Catholics of the other provinces of Germany criticize the Catholics of Bavaria for being more interested in their local than in the national government, and insofar failing to join their brethren in a more definite united front against radicalism."

Ludendorff's bitter anti-Catholicism rallied certain of the more short-sighted elements among the Protestants to his side—a fact that was disastrous, since the balance of power in the Reichstag was held by the Catholic

Center Party. In fact, it was the dissolution of that party that later delivered the nation to Hitler.

3.

FROM Northern Germany, Msgr. Noll crossed over to Amsterdam and The Hague. Holland impressed him with 1) its cleanliness, 2) its bicycles, 3) its flowers. He was enthusiastic over the friendly relationship between Catholics and Protestants. He found the country one-third Catholic with a faith so vigorous that it was supporting nearly a hundred Catholic papers and, tiny as it is, the country was leading the world in its foreign mission effort.

"The Protestants of Holland seek to have Catholics unite their forces with them to prevent the ascendancy of Christianity's common enemy," he wrote; "and 'the best man for the position' is their motto in Parliament. At present, the Minister of Parliament is a Catholic, and a priest heads the Catholic Party, which has about one-third of all the representatives. The Protestant Party has one-fourth of the representatives—and these two groups constitute the Right Wing against the Socialists and Liberals, who make up about two-fifths of the membership of Parliament—the Left Wing.

"The co-operation of Catholics and Protestants is responsible for the fair school laws in this Kingdom. Church and State are separate, while the State supports both Protestant and Catholic schools in addition to the public schools, which are free to all."

In Belgium, Msgr. Noll stopped off at Malines to pay his respects to Cardinal Mercier whom he had met on his visit to the United States a few years previously. It happened to be the day after the Cardinal had celebrated the golden anniversary of his ordination to the

priesthood. He also visited Msgr. de Becker, rector, at the time, of Louvain University.

Although he thought Belgium "probably the most progressive small country in the world" and nearly all Catholic by profession, he found "a large percentage of its male population rather indifferent in the practice of their religious duties."

Msgr. Noll's cousin had been in France several times, including ten months as an army chaplain during the War, so the two separated for a few weeks, his cousin going to London and Msgr. Noll to Paris. For him this involved the usual sights, trips to the battlefields, etc. But he made it a point to visit Lisieux and pray there at the Shrine of the Little Flower.

He found one aspect of French politics rather puzzling:

"In France," he wrote, "the idea prevails that religion should have absolutely no part in politics, and members of Parliament will, in their representative capacity, vote entirely different from what they would as individuals. For instance, at the time the Separation Law was passed, many Senators and Deputies voted for the secularization of education, and then reached down into their pockets to pay for the support of private religious schools for their own children!"

He remarked that in France, the party in power can perpetuate its influence by employing millions of voters consisting of all the postmasters and mail carriers in the land, all school teachers, policemen, all the workers in tobacco, cigar, and cigarette factories, besides many railroad workers. Naturally, he observed, no one is going to vote against the source of his own paycheck.

"Aerial travel is far more advanced throughout Europe than in our own country," he wrote. "Two trips

are made daily from Paris to London. I tried it and enjoyed it very much. The 260 miles are made in two hours and thirty minutes."

(With planes leaving Le Bourget for London practically every hour, the time of that trip has since been shaved to around ninety minutes.)

Like every Catholic visitor to London, Msgr. Noll was made sad by the sight of St. Edward the Confessor's sarcophagus enshrined in Protestant Westminster Abbey —a church which, as the guides do not hesitate to announce, was taken away from the Catholics. He had the same feeling at Oxford and Eton, surrounded by the relics of an intense devotion to the Blessed Mother and the Roman Pontiff—a devotion long since obsolete.

However, he was well impressed with the prosperity of the Catholic Church in England and, as usual, with what might be called the European system of supporting the schools:

"Despite the heavy drain on her national treasury, England continues to support denominational schools. Education is very far advanced, while it is not quite as much a fetich as it is in this country."

In Scotland he was surprised to find the percentage of Catholics three times as great as in England, with more than 400,000 Catholics in the Diocese of Glasgow alone.

"Probably in no other country are the school laws so fair to Catholics as in Scotland," he reported, "where the government not only supports religious schools, but builds them and keeps them in repair. Just this year [1924] the Catholics made the proposal that they build their own schools, and that the government pay a rental for them, and the proposal was accepted by the government. In England, the government will permit Catholics

or Methodists to have a school of their own whenever the parents of forty children in any school district ask for it, and the government will maintain the school after it is built."

He was careful to brief himself on conditions in Ireland for the benefit of *Our Sunday Visitor* readers:

"I entered Ireland at the extreme north, and departed from it at the extreme south. I interviewed priests and lay people at Belfast, Dublin, Maynooth, Cork, and intervening points. I conversed with the jaunting-car drivers, with men in the train, with the hotel-keeper and with the merchant. Before entering Ireland at all I was with more than fifty people from Ireland, representing both factions, first, for a week at a hotel in Palestine, and then for six days more on the boat from Beirut to Constantinople; and we discussed the question as thoroughly as it could be discussed."

The people of Ireland, he concluded, outside the Protestant element in Ulster, were pretty well united when the fighting was against England only for the fullest measure of independence; but when it became an internal struggle, following the acceptance of the Free State Government by the Irish delegates, most of those who had anything at stake in Ireland were against the Republicans; and at that time they were with the forces in power, especially for the sake of peace.

Msgr. Noll had a pleasant visit with Father Murray, administrator of the pro-Cathedral in Belfast and a cousin of Archbishop Hanna of San Francisco. Belfast exemplified the effect of persecution on Catholics. Father Murray told his visitor that not one in a thousand missed Sunday Mass there, and that nearly every Belfast Catholic stood ready to die for his Faith.

Yet, curiously, the Catholic body in Ireland has

always been most tolerant. Of the fourteen judges representing all Ireland in the high courts, Msgr. Noll found that only five were Catholics.

After several days at Cork and Queenstown, they crossed over to Southampton, where they embarked for New York on the *Olympic*.

4.

IT had been a great trip, a liberal education, really, for the Indiana publisher. He had been in Italy and Germany on their respective election days, and had come into France only a few days after an election had taken place. He was in Athens on the day when the republic had been declared. He was at Beirut when a cavalcade of thirty-five cars arrived, filled with Turkish nobility, exiled from their homeland when the Caliphate had been overthrown. He was in London when the King and Queen of Italy had arrived, as well as on the day when, according to the papers, the greatest celebration ever witnessed in that country took place during the Empire Exposition at Wembley. Every place in Europe was in a state of unrest, and no government seemed secure.

He could see even then that democracy had been more of a nuisance than a help to many of the European countries where the people had been ill-prepared for it—especially since after World War I, Austria and Hungary had been invaded by Communists and a large portion of Germany and Italy had gone Socialist. These situations paved the way for totalitarianism in Italy and Germany

Hitler had not yet come into power at that time, but he was taking advantage of the political and economic unrest to build his own party.

Returning to Germany in 1930, he revisited many

places besides attending the Passion Play at Oberammergau. He stopped over night with the editor of a Catholic paper in Munich, where they discussed their mutual problems as editors, and where he attended a political meeting in the famous Bier-Halle, where later Hitler nearly lost his life. He was eager to see what the trends of the times were because a national election was imminent.

An election was run off while he was in Germany—the first time the Australian ballot was used in the country—with twenty-three different sets of candidates running for the same offices. In other words, Germany's population was divided among that many different political groups. Of 30,000,000 votes cast, he observed that "fully half of them were for the enthronement of Communism, Socialism, and a kind of K.K.K. Nationalism. Germany is sane at heart," he wrote, "but in their present discontented state her people are willing to go the limit for something new."

There were so many different political parties that the ones elected to the Reichstag in Berlin or to the legislatures of the states, often received no more than five per cent of the vote. That "proportionate" representation was bad for Germany at that time, because one could be elected with ninety-five per cent of the people against him, since that ninety-five per cent vote might be divided among more than twenty other candidates who would receive only three or four per cent each. When Parliament convened it was discovered that there would be no possibility of effecting a working majority on any measure. It was then that President von Hindenburg reluctantly selected Hitler as his Chancellor. The previous Chancellors, from the day the German Republic was formed after World War I,

had all been Catholics and good Catholics, leaders in the Center Party, which really saved Germany from Communism at the end of the first war.

It was a different Msgr. Noll, then, who boarded the *Olympia* that day in Southampton. He had broadened. Now he had a realization of the Church not only as a national institution, but in its proper perspective as a globe-girdling corporation. And he had been close to an enemy that within a few decades would drive Catholics and Protestants together in a common fight for their very lives. Yes—there was still plenty of work for a crusading editor with abundant zeal.

In 1921, Msgr. Noll spent five months in South America. He was accompanied by Father Joseph Hickey, one of five sons who had entered the holy priesthood in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. They sailed down the Atlantic coast to Panama, through the canal to the Pacific and then coast-wise south as far as Valparaiso, Chile. They stopped a week in Lima, Peru; visited Cusco, ancient capital of the Incas; Arequipa and other cities in Peru. Later they journeyed to La Paz, Bolivia and Mollendo. Going farther south, the travellers made calls at Antafogasta, Iquique, and Valparaiso.

After a week's sojourn in Santiago, they crossed the Andes and the continent to Buenos Aires, Argentina, thence to Montevideo and later several ports in Brazil. On the return voyage to New York, calls were made at Barbados and Martinique.

In all these countries, Msgr. Noll requested prelates and heads of institutions—native to their respective areas—to fill out his printed questionnaire. By this method of seeking information on religious, moral, social, economic and educational matters, he was assured true facts which the ordinary tourist never obtained.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

With Scrip And Staff

THE return trip from Europe was something of a retreat for Msgr. Noll. Undisturbed by mail or telephone, with no urgent business, no editorial deadlines pressing, he felt a sense of well being, of wholesome relaxation. As he sat bundled in his deck chair, enjoying the tang of the clean air, or pacing the decks, stopping occasionally to rest his eyes on the limitless blue-green expanse before him, he went over the recollections of his trip. And it was an ideal opportunity to plan for the future.

He was forty-nine years old now, pastor of a devoted congregation, with a parish-plant that would more than outlast his own lifetime and, better still, that was debt-free. His publications were thriving. They had made him an international figure, certainly the most widely known Catholic journalist in the world. Only a few years before, the Holy Father had honored him by appointing him a member of the Papal Household—a domestic prelate.

God had been good to him, and he was content to live out the rest of his days as Pastor of St. Mary's, only two blocks up the street from his printing plant.

His father, now eighty-three, was still living with his stepmother in Fort Wayne. Well, the Monsignor would bring them and one of his sisters over to Huntington to be near him. That would mean that the old folks would have the consolation of being near their children during the evening of their life.

But though he abandoned all thought of a change and meant to settle down and live out the rest of his

life in Huntington, he certainly did not intend to go into stagnation. No indeed!

There was the question of larger quarters for *Our Sunday Visitor.* The corporation had outgrown its original building. There were funds enough on hand, and he intended to throw himself into the work of rebuilding just as soon as he got back to the states.

And *The Acolyte*—it, too, was planned on that crossing from Southampton to New York.

2.

IN the thick of these activities—Mr. and Mrs. Noll had already been installed in Huntington; several editorial conferees were meeting and discussing the proposed journal for the clergy; the new plant for *Our Sunday Visitor,* brick and stone, was already past the first-floor level, with a second-floor-level suite in prospect that the publisher could easily convert into living quarters for himself—while all these projects were whirling toward completion, Bishop Alerding met with a tragic accident.

For twenty-four years he had ruled the See of Fort Wayne, consolidating the parochial-school system and opening high schools. He had met and faced successfully the problem of immigrant laborers settling with their families at Gary, East Chicago, Indiana Harbor, and Hammond, in his diocese. On one day alone, he had founded five national parishes to take care of United States Steel workers in Gary brought over by the mills from the countries of Eastern Europe.

But now, at seventy-nine, he was tired, and chronic diabetes had long been gnawing at his vitality. The shock was more than he could stand, then, when on Thanksgiving Day, 1924, the automobile in which he was

a passenger, was struck by a trolley-car. He was rushed to St. Joseph's Hospital in Fort Wayne, suffering from injuries and shock which resulted in death on December 6.

During the following January, a letter for Msgr. Noll arrived from the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop (later Cardinal) Fumasoni-Biondi.

In our country the Apostolic Delegate, although he is not officially accredited as a diplomatic minister or ambassador to the Government, is nevertheless the personal representative of the Pope. All important business, such as the appointments of Bishops and matters concerning urgent dispensations and disciplinary matters, is commonly cleared through his office.

The Archbishop wanted to see Msgr. Noll at his earliest convenience. This might mean that the publisher was to be offered the Bishopric of Fort Wayne. Monsignor Noll, arrived in Washington, went immediately to see the Delegate, and was asked his opinion on an administrative matter of immediate concern, the question of whether the Diocese of Fort Wayne should be divided, with a Bishopric located in Gary. It was a difficult question to answer. He had lived a life bounded by his parish, with little chance to get into the western sector of the State, and his only extensive trips had taken him to distant parts of the United States, the Near East, South America and to Europe. He promised to gather data on Catholic population, institutions, etc., in the Gary area, and to determine whether the newly populated region could support a Bishop and his Curia.

Returning to Huntington, he went back to his editorial and parish work. There always seemed to be so much to do, and so little time in which to do it. He found himself sitting at his desk far into the night and

up early next morning to be at his parish duties. February passed, and March and April, and spring was again in the land in May, the country awake again in green.

On the 13th of that month there was a second letter from the Apostolic Delegate by registered mail. He toyed with the envelope a few moments. He was so busy that another trip to Washington seemed impossible at that time. However . . . But this was not a request to come to Washington. Under oath of secrecy he was apprised in the letter that Pope Pius XI had appointed him Bishop of Fort Wayne, with a deadline set for his acceptance, and the privilege of consulting one friend on the matter.

Should he take it? Might it not be a clear call from the Holy Ghost? It meant that the Bishops of his province, meeting twice each year in Cincinnati, had studied him out and, after prayerful consideration, recommended him to the Holy Father as one who was in every way fitted for the responsibilities of such an exalted office. The Apostolic Delegate had evidently appraised and passed on his qualifications during his interview four months previously.

He was a Fort Wayne priest, baptized, confirmed, and ordained in the very Cathedral in which he now had a call for consecration.

And the Episcopate is the fullness of the priesthood. A Bishop confers all of the seven sacraments and can consecrate other Bishops. He has the whole of Christ's priestly power. He is a member of the "Teaching Church," a Doctor of Divinity by divine right, with a title to participate in and help form the infallible decisions of oecumenical councils.

As to the publications—when he thought of it, Fort Wayne was connected with Huntington by a concrete

highway, a railroad and an interurban line. The two cities were only twenty-four miles apart and there was always the telephone. He had built up an editorial and clerical staff sufficient to keep his printing plant and publications going as usual. His business manager, Joseph W. Mehring, had been with him practically from the start. He was a veritable "altar ego" so far as policy procedure was concerned. Certainly, this was not an insurmountable obstacle.

His health?—Why, at forty-nine, he still had a rugged constitution, had only once or twice in his life spent a day in bed. He was still in his prime, and perhaps he could do more for his diocesans by weekly chats through his paper than could another Bishop, who would not see that his "Visitor" would reach every home with instructions and with friendly chats every week.

Certainly he would accept the appointment.

The weeks between May 13 and June 30, the date of his consecration, were a tempest of activity—with, of course, *Our Sunday Visitor* going to press each Thursday as usual, the June and July issues of *The Acolyte* reaching their subscribers in good time.

Invitations had to be mailed out, arrangements made for accommodating the guests, the consecration breakfast, a reception for the diocesan clergy, a civic reception, the solemn installation—but all those matters could be delegated to others. He had to be measured for his new wardrobe—and sometime, during that interval, he had to make a week's preparatory retreat.

The Chicago clergy—Cardinal Mundelein, who was to be the consecrating prelate, together with his Auxiliary Bishops and other dignitaries—were coming over in a special train.

Bishop Joseph Chartrand of Indianapolis was to preach for the occasion. Although he was not well, his was the only other diocese in Indiana and it was on that ground he allowed the Bishop-elect to persuade him.

But on the evening before the ceremony, Bishop Chartrand became so ill that his doctor ordered him to cancel his Fort Wayne commitment. This meant that Monsignor Noll had to find some stout-hearted cleric willing and able on a few hours' notice to get up and deliver an address on a highly specialized theme before a Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church, a plethora of Archbishops and Bishops, hundreds of the clergy, and a church overflowing with the laity—a critical congregation indeed.

There was only one man in the city of Fort Wayne that night who could do it, and that was old Msgr. Cleary of Minneapolis. This venerable prelate, well over eighty, had been famous in his day as a Chautauqua lecturer.

By now it was eleven o'clock at night. Nevertheless, the Bishop-elect hurried down to his room at the Keenan Hotel and beat on the old priest's door while the telephone operator kept up a jangle inside.

"Who is it?" a sleepy voice finally called out.

"It's the person you came here to honor—John Noll!"

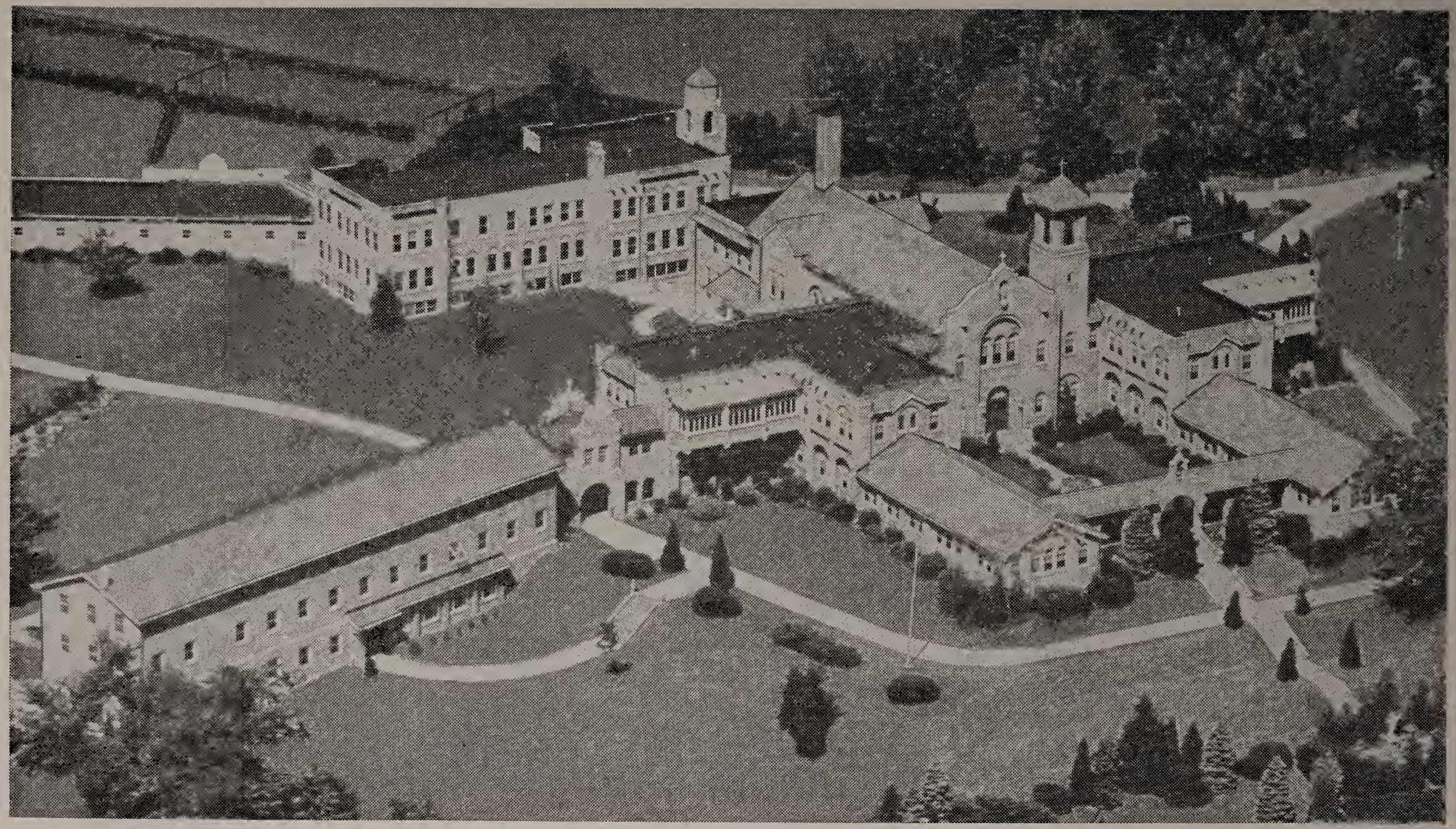
There was a moment of silence. Then—

"Get to bed. You're drunk!"

"No, no! Listen—Monsignor—open the door a minute."

Msgr. Noll was afraid the whole floor would be aroused.

The door opened a few inches and Msgr. Cleary cautiously sized up the situation.



The Motherhouse of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Victory near Huntington, Indiana. Located at Victory Noll, the Motherhouse overlooks the famed Wabash Valley.

The western Headquarters of the Victory-Noll Sisters, at Redlands, California, situated in an orange grove, and surrounded by the San Bernardino mountains.

The Apostolic Delegate, the Most Rev. Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, D.D., visits Victory-Noll the day before the consecration of Bishop Pursley, Auxiliary to Bishop Noll.

The Apostolic Delegate, the Most Rev. Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, D.D., visits with Bishop Noll at Victory Noll.

"Oh, pardon me, Bishop," he said, as soon as he recognized his caller, "I thought it was a drunk trying to play a joke on me. What's the trouble? Come on in!"

"We've just had a wire from Bishop Chartrand. He says he will not be able to preach tomorrow."

"Go on!"

"Yes. Here it is. And, Monsignor, we've chosen you to take his place. You'll have to, Monsignor. There's no one else who could do it. You can't let us down."

Msgr. Cleary put on his spectacles and scanned the telegram.

"You mean—you want *me* to get up there and preach tomorrow morning?" Msgr. Noll nodded his head in silence.

"How long would I have to talk?"

"Oh—twenty minutes to half an hour."

Msgr. Cleary scratched his head quizzically for a moment.

"Sure, I'll help you out. You get to bed and get a good night's sleep. Let *me* worry about the sermon."

Whether or not the old Monsignor got any sleep that night no one knows, but all of those present the next morning testified that they had rarely heard a more eloquent and impassioned discourse on the office of a Bishop.

3.

AT the time of Bishop Noll's accession to the Diocese, it had a Catholic population of about 125,000, served by 148 priests in 130 parishes. He was fortunate in having Notre Dame University located within his jurisdiction, together with St. Mary's of the Lake for girls, St.

Joseph's College at Rensselaer, under the direction of the Precious Blood Fathers, and the schools and houses of formation of many other religious communities. It was a thriving diocese with a loyal and generous laity closely bound to a devoted clergy. The aggregate parish indebtedness was something over $7,000,000. The one great objective in Fort Wayne—as in most other dioceses of the country at that time—was the expanding of the school system to include high schools for both boys and girls.

He found now—if he had not known it before—that running a diocese in the twentieth century is "big business." If pioneer Bishops were called on to jog miles on horseback, confirming, preaching, and ordaining, the present-day Bishop has a regimen no less arduous, even though much of his time is spent behind a desk. He is primarily a father to the poor and afflicted of his diocese. There is no orphanage, no hospital, no charity, that does not have the full backing of the Bishop.

All confirmations were administered by the Bishop personally. It entails visiting every parish in the diocese —often two or three in one day—with a ritual carried out on each individual candidate. Bishop Noll has often said that he finds his greatest relaxation from his office and editorial work in these visits to parishes. It had been his principal reason for not requesting an Auxiliary Bishop earlier. Only in September, 1950, did he yield to the appointment of an assistant Bishop in the person of the Rev. Leo Aloysius Pursley, pastor of St. John the Baptist Parish, Fort Wayne. To date Bishop Noll has confirmed 133,000 Catholics, and has ordained over 500 priests.

How was the new Bishop, unassisted, to reconcile this voracious routine with journalism?

He could do it only by delegating his responsibilities to able men wherever that were possible, by organizing his diocese as tightly as a drumhead.

He first trained and then installed an efficient staff in his Chancery to handle routine matters such as finances, requests for dispensations, marriage cases, and the like. Trusting them implicitly, he had his mornings free for work on *Our Sunday Visitor*, leaving to the Chancellor, under his direction, all financial matters.

Then there were the Deans. Each diocese is broken down into sections, each in charge of a "Rural Dean," whose duty it is to keep order, to check the records of each parish periodically, and to help the pastor solve minor problems as they arise. In some dioceses the office is more of an honor than a responsibility. But in Fort Wayne, the Dean is a trusted lieutenant of the Bishop, depending on him for instructions and expected to report back in due course with a record of achievement.

Thus it happens that in Fort Wayne the Catholic Youth Organization, the Diocesan Councils of Catholic Men and Women, the St. Vincent de Paul Society and the Legion of Mary were so efficiently organized that they could serve as models for the rest of the country.

Even at that, of course, there was an irreducible minimum of business that required the personal attention of His Excellency. But a man accustomed to an efficiently organized and back-breaking routine, such as Bishop Noll, found time to accomplish as much and more than ever before.

4.

HE had hardly had time to consolidate his hold on the diocese when the whole country was struck by the

depression of 1929. During the four previous years he had dedicated many churches and schools, put up when it looked as though prosperity must go on forever, but now those parishes were caught with heavy debts.

The United States Steel Corporation shut down—practically the only industry in Gary and East Chicago. In that section there were over 90,000 people on relief—unable, obviously, to help liquidate their parish indebtedness.

Bishop Noll recalls that, "Many parishes would not have been able to meet their interest even if every cent collected by the priest were used for that one purpose. There was no money with which to pay janitors, or organists, or even school teachers. Many of our Sisterhoods," he says, "received only the five and ten-cent offerings which children might be able to bring to the Sisters once a month. In some parishes, this aggregated about $8.00 per month per teacher.

"Hospitals were not receiving one-fifth of their necessary expenditures. We have in mind one hospital," he says, "whose cornerstone was laid just two years before the depression, and which started with a debt of $650,000, bearing 5½% interest. That alone came to more than $100 a day, and yet the hospital often took in as little as one dollar in a day. The township was supposed to pay for many charity cases, but it had no money. In the meantime, hospital receipts were inadequate even to feed the patients and the seventy or eighty girls registered in the School of Nursing."

In Fort Wayne, the Bishop is not a "Corporation Sole"—as in many other dioceses; the Bishop of Fort Wayne holds parish property as trustee for the parish and hence any local indebtedness is an obligation of the parish using the property.

Nevertheless, Bishop Noll felt a serious moral obligation in the matter, since parish loans were usually to be had only after he had endorsed the note of the applicant congregation. He vowed, then, that no creditor of any parish in his diocese would lose a single dollar of the principal loaned.

His first step was to get the rate of interest reduced on the six hundred and fifty notes outstanding against the parishes in Lake County. Next he must get in touch with the officers of several banks and insurance companies. The Bishop offered to make himself responsible for the principal in return for a reduction in the interest. There was a readiness on their part to go along in some small measure, but the Bishop held out for three percent and finally got it, after promising to pay all delinquent principal and interest installments.

There was only one way to procure that money—have recourse to certain endowment funds of *Our Sunday Visitor,* especially those earnings earmarked for the support of the Missionary Catechists in poor places. With these funds he was able to persuade the creditors to make their rate of 3% retroactive to the time when interest was last paid by the parishes. All notes were then brought up to date and, after a few years, when the men got back to their work, their parishes became well enough able to carry their own burdens.

Our Sunday Visitor was not having an easy time of it, either. Circulation of all the periodicals dropped alarmingly, and orders on pamphlets and church envelopes fell to the vanishing point. Despite this, the Corporation carried its full payroll, laying no one off during the entire depression, and seeing that every employee got the current union wage. The men were kept busy stock-piling pamphlets against the inevitable day when

prosperity would return—for no one at *Our Sunday Visitor* even for a minute lost faith in the American economy.

In the twenty-five years of his reign, Bishop Noll has seen parish indebtedness reduced from more than seven million at the bottom of the depression, to less than half a million dollars in 1948; and most of the parishes then in debt most deeply are now entirely clear of it. The problem is different today. During the depression few parishes could afford to build. But the depression was succeeded by the War years when building was impossible. Now his pastors are forced to build in the face of the present high cost of material and skilled labor. The work is going ahead nevertheless. Since the fall of 1949, five large churches have been completed, together with a $900,000 school, and several other churches and schools of more modest proportions, representing an aggregate expenditure of more than $5,000-000. In addition, a new preparatory seminary and a new Chancery were built, and improvements on the entire Cathedral property, costing more than $2,000,000, were completed without incurring new indebtedness.

Bishop Noll estimates the present replacement value of his diocesan institutions and parish properties at approximately one hundred million dollars. Against this, the indebtedness is presently $2,300,000, or less than 3% —nothing much to be concerned about.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The Roaring Twenties

IN 1928, the Democratic Party, meeting in convention at Houston, Texas, nominated Alfred E. Smith as its candidate for President, with Senator Joseph T. Robinson of Arkansas, his running-mate. Their chief opponents were the Republicans Herbert Hoover and Senator Charles Curtis.

John J. Raskob, a Catholic—as was Al Smith, of course—had recently been named chairman of the National Democratic Committee, to manage the campaign. Among Raskob's chief interests was the repeal of prohibition, which he was convinced was a curse to the nation. Thus, "repeal" came to be written into the Democratic platform of that campaign.

While the Democrats could see the issue of religion in prospect, certainly they could have had no idea that the storm of anti-Catholicism would burst with such violence. Times were good then, there seemed to be no limit on "prosperity," and the country was in the throes of what can only be described as an endemic boredom. The Ku Klux Klan with its sheeted hoodlums and fantastic argot had been doing its best through the previous few years to relieve this ennui, particularly in the small towns—and here, in the Smith-Hoover campaign, they found a situation precisely fitted for their hand.

Al Smith became "Alcoholic Smith," the craven minion of the Pope, already preparing to take over the White House as an American Vatican, with Hoover somehow cast as the White Knight of Americanism,

loins girt and lance upraised to save the country from the black hell of Romanism. It was a role Hoover did not choose. It was thrust upon him.

There were three factors here in close collaboration: an unscrupulous element in the Republican Party that hoped to tear the "Solid South" from the support of Smith; a band of cynical journalists out to exploit the situation for what it was worth in cold cash; and the sincere, if mistaken, dread on the part of many honest Protestants, of the Roman Catholic Church.

Raskob chose Michael Williams, then editor of *The Commonweal,* to handle the religious angle of the campaign, and Williams turned to the man he knew was best able to marshal the forces of truth in the fray: Bishop Noll. The Bishop immediately detailed Robert Hull, a recent convert minister working on the staff of *Our Sunday Visitor,* to help Williams in every way possible, and from the day of Smith's nomination until the election Hull worked full time at supplying Williams with refutations of the hate and bigotry at work.

It was not hard to find evidence. In his residence at Fort Wayne, Bishop Noll assembled a huge scrapbook comprising paste-ups dealing with anti-Catholicism. This he duplicated by photostat and distributed to the members of the hierarchy, important pastors, and various civic leaders through the country. In the first dozen photostats he showed only the titles of papers whose purpose was to poison the minds of the American people against the Catholic Church, and to confirm in their prejudices those who had never known the Catholic Church in any other light.

There was *The American Standard,* "Readers Condemn My Arrest—Patriotic Americans Protest Against Papal-Jewish Tactics"; *The Herald of the Epiphany,*

"Do You Know Papal Designs on America"; *The Hundred Percent Magazine,* "Devoted to the Ku Klux Klan"; *The New Age; The Masonic Observer,* "Real Romanism Revealed"; *The People's Press,* "Purgatory and Priestcraft" and "Are There Honest Clergy?"; *Converted Roman Catholic* and Protestant Missionary, "Rome Suggests That Pope May Move Here"; "Coolidge appointing Many Roman Catholics"; "New York Names a Square for Leif Ericson;" "Papal Terms Placed in Cross-Word Puzzles."

These were only a handful of the papers flooding the country that year, the first time they had had a chance to crawl out from underground since the death of *The Menace.* Some of them, such as *The Fellowship Forum*—a Klan paper launched in Washington by the *New Age,* and Haldemann-Julius', *The American Freeman* had vast circulations, with the backing of powerful organizations.

More than a million copies of the bogus Knights of Columbus Oath were circulated, chiefly in the South. The Order prosecuted six persons responsible for its distribution in the States of Illinois, Michigan, Iowa, and Georgia. Then the Knights offered a reward of $25,000 to anyone who could prove that the Oath was genuine.

The country was off on a sanctimonious binge such as it had not experienced in decades. It was black hatred traveling in the guise of religion.

Up and down the country the shouting went on about Smith the Papist, Smith the Alcoholic, and in the South the added opprobrium that he was for Racial Equality. Placards cried from walls, magazines shrieked from newsstands, and in the bookshops the tracts and books appeared, *Three Keys to Hell, or Rum, Romanism, and Ruin; House of Death and Gate of Hell; The Pope*

and The War. Like the grim horsemen of the Apocalypse, the shadow of the Pope lay over the land, while in the Vatican a very quiet man who had done nothing more violent in his day than climb many high mountains wondered just what America seemed to fear. He blessed the American pilgrims, and knelt daily in prayer when he thought of the blindness of these people he loved so much.

Each week *Our Sunday Visitor* took up the newest batch of accusations, and with the same patience he had cultivated doing the first work of this type, Bishop Noll answered them point by point from the writings of historians and theologians.

When the "National Lutheran Editors' Association," meeting at Columbus, Ohio, had finished its business, they handed a resolution to the Associated Press, stating among other things that "the peculiar allegiance that a faithful Catholic owes to the teachings of his Church, toward a foreign sovereign, who also claims supremacy in secular affairs, may clash with the best interests of the country."

Bishop Noll, at the request of Monsignor Burke, General Secretary of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, issued a rebuttal, based wholly on the writings of Protestants, and the Associated Press carried his reply. The issue was so important that it was debated in the pages of *The Atlantic Monthly.*

A monumental oversight by our critics was the failure to consider that Mr. Hoover had been married by a Catholic priest, a warm personal friend of his; and Senator Curtis, of part-Indian extraction, had been baptized a Catholic. Hoover's nomination speech had been delivered by Joseph Scott, a very prominent Catholic and a Knight of St. Gregory. Another of his princi-

pal backers was Colonel P. H. Callahan of Louisville, who had headed the Religious Prejudice Commission of the Knights of Columbus during and after World War I, and who was also a Papal Knight.

In fact, within a month after Hoover's nomination, a large volume of some three hundred pages was got out for circulation among the five million Polish people of the country. The idea was to win their vote on the score that the Republican candidate had done a great deal of relief work in Poland after the first War when Pope Pius XI, then Cardinal Ratti, was Nuncio to that country. This book carried a picture of the Holy Father seated with President Hoover, calculated to show that they were warm friends and that Hoover's candidacy was most acceptable to the Supreme Pontiff.

Nevertheless, although in a later year Franklin D. Roosevelt would disavow all Communist support, no one elicited a word from Hoover that might be construed as reproof for the fanatics and bigots camping on his coat-tails. On the contrary, the country was treated to the ill-savoring antics of Mrs. Mabel Walker Willebrandt, prominent in the Department of Justice, urging Methodists to do their duty as Methodists at the polls.

And the Methodist Bishop Cannon was reported as saying, "We have sent out one million pledge cards to Southern Democrats to pledge themselves to vote and work against Smith, to contribute money, and organize anti-Smith clubs."

2.

DURING all this commotion, the Catholic Church exercised not just an attitude of reserve—she actually bent backward. The Democratic candidate might have

had just cause to complain about the lack of support from his co-religionists.

Up until 1928, it had been the custom of the American Bishops to hold their annual meeting in October. But during that election year, they postponed their meeting until mid-November lest it be suspected that they met to discuss politics.

No Cardinal, Archbishop, or Bishop endorsed Smith, much less was there any official denunciation of Hoover.

When the Knights of Columbus held their national convention in August of that year, the chairman opened the proceedings by declaring that "if any delegate should so much as mention the name of either candidate for the presidency, he will be declared out of order."

The convention of the National Council of Catholic Men, also held usually in October, was postponed that year until after the general election.

During those weeks, Bishop Noll was still sending to Huntington, each Tuesday morning, copy for the next edition of his paper.

The pages of his little paper presented a strange sight—an island of peace in a welter of partisanship. Not once did *Our Sunday Visitor* recommend voting for Smith. Not once did it impugn the Republican Party. Instead, it very patiently, very charitably examined one by one the charges being alleged against the Church by its fanatical contemporaries. Whenever he could find them—and that was often enough, be it said to their credit—the Bishop would quote Protestant ministers disfavoring the excesses of their colleagues—Dr. Henry van Dyke, for instance, and Dr. Phillip Cone Fletcher, a Methodist Episcopal pastor in San Antonio. Others of these fair-minded Protestants, quoted by *Our Sunday*

Visitor, were Senator Harry B. Hawes of Missouri, who declared that "The anti-Catholic campaign is resented by millions"; Governor Albert C. Ritchie of Maryland; Bishop Anderson (Episcopal) of Chicago; the Hon. John W. Davis, a previous presidential nominee; and Raymond B. Fosdick, a Trustee of the Rockefeller Foundation.

At the polls in November, Al Smith, "The Happy Warrior," as Franklin D. Roosevelt had dubbed him, went under in what was perhaps the most glorious defeat ever experienced by a presidential candidate. He had fought a clean fight. He had been opposed by rampant bigotry, and his opponent fell heir to the most savage depression in the history of our nation.

3.

BISHOP NOLL thinks that in the long run the campaign did no lasting harm to the Church. On the contrary, it brought bigotry into the open, and because the South had been traditionally Democratic, the editor of practically every responsible paper in the Southland felt it incumbent upon him to answer the charges made against the Church by her enemies. Bishop Emmet Walsh, now Coadjutor Bishop of Youngstown, but quondam pastor of the Pro-Cathedral in Atlanta, told Bishop Noll that the 1928 campaign had actually helped the Church in his home-State. The people of Georgia voted seventeen to one for Smith. Of course, the way had been prepared for this by the Georgia Catholic Laymen's Association, which followed the Christian Science policy of writing a friendly letter to every editor who attacked the Church without warrant, or who gave space to features of a similar nature. At the time of Smith's campaign, they had become at least outwardly friendly.

The Church also received glowing tributes for her

comportment from many a non-Catholic. The editor of *The Atlantic Monthly,* Ellery Sedgwick, for instance, wrote to the editor of *The Baltimore Sun,* admiring "the dignity, the forbearance, and the good citizenship of the Roman Catholic clergy in America."

"I doubt indeed," he continued, "whether our history affords an instance of a large and cohesive body of men who, under the bitterest provocation, have better kept their self-control and self-respect.

"What they have felt under a campaign of undeserved aspersion could perhaps not be expressed in words. But in all the welter of open slander and covert sneers I have not noticed a single un-Christian retort, a single unworthy reply made by a priest of the Church of Rome.

"Let us be just. This Church, quite alien to most of us, has taught us a lesson in manners and in morals. It is a common-place of such reasonable conversation as is still conducted during this campaign that had the Catholic Clergy thrown themselves into the hurly-burly after the pattern of their Methodist brothers the republic would have been rocked on its foundation. . .

"My mail reeks with imbecilities about 'Rum & Romanism.' It is stated that the Jesuits have bought in secret the magazine which I edit, and I am offered the choice of pleading guilty to knavery or utter folly. The fine appeal made by Franklin Roosevelt to the sense of public decency is not misplaced.

"The ventilation of this festering sore is for the best. To the Americanism preached by Ireland and Gibbons is now added the Americanism practiced by Smith. The Catholic Church in America is in the civic sense an American church. Ultramontanism is in this country a lost cause. To the limbo where it belongs, Protestant

bigotry must follow. The conduct of the Church, high above reproach in this bad crisis, will not be forgotten."

On November 4, *The New York Times* made editorial comment that "No Priest or Catholic publication of any prominence has noticed the violent challenges of Senator Heflin, Bishop Cannon and others."

The editor of the Richmond *News-Leader* wrote:

"Every thoughtful American must have been impressed by the magnificent spirit of self-control the Catholics have shown throughout this fight. Assailed as no religious sect, not even the Mormons, ever has been in America, the Catholics have not answered insult with insult, nor lie with lie. It has been an inspiring instance of real loyalty to the teaching of Him, who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not."

Thomas Lomax Hunter had earlier observed in *The Baltimore Evening Sun* (August 23):

"Since the beginning of American history there have been organizations, fraternal and secret, whose object was to fight the Catholic Church. The country has always been filled with newspapers of *The Menace* type, hot with scurrilous and venomous assaults on the Catholic citizen. Such papers have no Catholic counterpart.

"The first conclusion to be drawn from the different attitudes is that the Catholic Church is busied entirely with her religious functions. She has thrived under Protestant presidents and will thrive under them again."

CHAPTER NINETEEN

On The National Scene

WITH nearly thirty million members, the Catholic Church in America has been divided, for purposes of administration, into twenty-three archdioceses, one hundred and one dioceses, and one vicariate-apostolic. In each of these the Cardinal, Archbishop, or Bishop is very much like a little Pope in his own territory. Subject to the Code of Canons, his word is law.

But to care for the broader interests of the Church throughout the nation, a sort of Episcopal Senate is needed. During the pioneering days of the country there was no such need; then later, James Cardinal Gibbons acquired such prestige that he was recognized by most people as the chief representative of the Church in America. But toward the close of his life, this great churchman threw his immense influence behind the organization of a National Catholic Welfare Council.

The Council was started at the beginning of World War I, to consolidate the contribution of American Catholics to the war effort, with Monsignor John J. Burke heading the work. A fund of five million dollars was first raised by the Knights of Columbus, who were recognized by the Government as a service organization for Catholic military personnel, together with the Y.M.-C.A. for Protestants, and the Y.M.H.A. for the Jews. Soon afterward, an additional thirty million dollars were allocated to the Knights, part of a huge fund raised in a drive conducted jointly by the three agencies. Commenting on this grant, Cardinal Gibbons remarked that "the President, in recognizing the National Catholic War

Council, recognized the Hierarchy." For the War Council was the Bishops' Council.

When hostilities finally ceased, the Bishops, unwilling to let the work lapse, reorganized it for permanent service into the National Catholic Welfare Conference. It was given status as the official voluntary agency of the Bishops by both Pope Benedict XV and Pope Pius XI.

The Hierarchy stated that the "National Catholic Welfare Conference is not a council or legislative assembly, as contemplated by the Sacred Canons, and therefore the resolutions of the Bishops at the meetings of the National Catholic Welfare Conference do not have the force of law . . . The Conference aims to facilitate discussions of policies affecting the interests and activities of the Church in the United States.

"Every Bishop of the Church in the United States and its territories and possessions, whether residential or titular, has active and passive voice in the Conference.

"The Conference is incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia and has as its objects the unifying, coordinating, and organizing of the Catholic people of the United States in works of education, social welfare, immigrant aid, civic education, Catholic press, and other activities.

"The Conference is administered by a board composed of ten Bishops elected at the annual meeting of the Hierarchy of the United States to serve for a term of one year. No elected Bishop shall be eligible to serve more than five consecutive terms, but he may be again eligible after one year out of office . . ."

Every fall, then, the Cardinals, Archbishops, and Bishops of the Church meet in Washington, generally in Caldwell Hall on the Campus of Catholic University, and as the Ordinary of Fort Wayne, Bishop Noll attended his first meeting in 1925. He had no sooner entered

the meeting room than Cardinal O'Connell of Boston beckoned him to come to the rostrum and serve as secretary to the meeting.

"Knowing that I was a journalist," Bishop Noll remarked later, "His Eminence perhaps thought I would be able to take down the minutes in shorthand. I'm afraid I disappointed him there. . . Still, I was kept on as secretary, not only at that meeting, but on through several years until I asked for an assistant, who was given to me in the person of Bishop Emmet Walsh, now Coadjutor Bishop of Youngstown."

At that first meeting the new Bishop was elected Treasurer of the American Board of Catholic Missions, recently organized for the Home Missions, to tie in with the Propagation of the Faith for Foreign Missions. He has held that office ever since, the only member of the original board. It was a recognition well deserved, for from his earliest contact with the missions, while still a priest, Bishop Noll had served on the Board of Governors of the Catholic Church Extension Society, and through *Our Sunday Visitor* he had raised nearly forty thousand dollars as the beginning of a fund to educate poor boys for the priesthood. He had been the first to aid Maryknoll, the American Foreign Mission Society founded by Father Thomas Price and Bishop James A. Walsh, by establishing two burses, one at Maryknoll itself, and the other at their preparatory seminary near Scranton. And there was also the consideration that for some years prior to the founding of the American Board of Catholic Missions, *Our Sunday Visitor* had been supporting ten schools for Mexicans in the Archdiocese of San Antonio, and had been helping many other dioceses in the Southwest with an annual subsidy.

Two years later, at the annual meeting, the Bishops elected him to one of the seven top administrative posts

of the N.C.W.C., and he was kept in that position for seven years, two years longer than the present by-law permits. After a year's absence he was again elected to a term which stretched out over the full five years, and he is now in his third set after a second absence of a year.

Undoubtedly his finest work with the N.C.W.C. was done as Episcopal Chairman of Lay Organizations, comprising the National Council of Catholic Men, the National Council of Catholic Women, and the National Council of Catholic Nurses. These Councils have their national offices at N.C.W.C. headquarters in Washington, with the rather all-inclusive purpose of maintaining "a permanent representation in the interests of the Catholic laity of the United States." The Councils function through locally organized units, and indirectly through some seventy-five hundred societies.

His experience as an organizer had fitted Bishop Noll for this work. He had formed a Catholic Youth Organization in his diocese that was a model for others. Two of his diocesan directors had been called to Washington to take charge of the Youth Bureau at the Headquarters of N.C.W.C. And in his new capacity he would need experience in organizing, for the Councils depend directly on the Chairman to help find and finance programs of action.

When he first took over his position as Episcopal Chairman of the Councils, radio was still regarded pretty much as an interesting toy. Nobody was quite sure how many people were listening, nor how long the public taste for radio would continue. Advertising was hardly dreamed of in the industry at that time, for the main trend in the program direction was to the elevated tastes, hoping to carry the masses up with the caliber of the program. If the people had purchased the records of Martinelli, Chaliapin, and Galli-Curci, they would

certainly want to hear voices like those coming from their radios.

Anyone who could play a piano well was welcome to a radio station. Talent was hard to find. If a man could entertain, he was a joy to the heart of the program managers. Announcers had to be musicians, engineers—and be prepared to sweep out the studio and pick up the cigarette butts when the programs were finished. But the big problem was finding people to fill up those deadly gaps of silence, the "dead air."

The Paulists had seen the possibilities of this new medium very early, and had gotten a charter for a radio station of their own, which they operated for many years from the rectory of their mother-church on 59th Street in New York City. Monsignor Burke, the General Secretary of the N.C.W.C., was a Paulist, and when he got together with the late Bishop Schrembs of Cleveland, the first Episcopal Chairman of Lay Organizations, and later with his successor, Bishop Noll, and Charles Dolle, executive secretary of the Men's Council, all agreed that in the radio they would have a tremendous medium of appeal to a vast audience.

Up to New York went Mr. Dolle with a proposition for the executives of the newborn N.B.C. How about setting up a national Catholic radio program with headline speakers and good, dignified music? N.B.C. thought it was a grand idea and the Catholic Hour was launched on March 2, 1929, with a gala program centered around the late Cardinal Hayes.

Those first programs were back-breakers. The Catholic Hour was literally that—a sixty-minute program. Radio was almost glad to have someone take the time off their hands. It was not until later that the executives discovered the priceless value of their surplus commodity.

At first the program depended for its music on the Paulist choristers, directed by Father Finn, often to the accompaniment of an orchestra supplied by N.B.C. There was an address—lengthy, by present standards—as the *pièce de résistance,* with the remainder of the time occupied by the "Question Box." The radio audience were invited to submit their problems. Anyone not answered over the air got his reply by first-class mail; but this gradually reached such menacing proportions that the question feature had to be dropped. There simply was not enough help available (or funds) to take care of all the research and correspondence.

Besides, before long the hour was cut in half and it was then that the format of the program became substantially what it is today: music, talk, music.

The time is donated by N.B.C., of course, as a partial means of acquitting their obligations under the Federal Communications Commission of providing programs in the "public interest, convenience and necessity."

All the other expenses involved in producing the program are shouldered by N.C.C.M. The speaker gets an honorarium—nominal, to be sure, but it mounts up over a period of fifty-two weeks. All his necessary expenses are paid. Besides, the talks are first mimeographed, then printed by Our Sunday Visitor, and a copy goes free to anyone who writes in for it. Then there are the salaries of the mail clerks, typists, and executive help needed in producing the program.

Very early in the history of the program, the Speakers' Committee of the Men's Council engaged a promising young orator by the name of Fulton J. Sheen. It would be hard to say now whether the Catholic Hour made Bishop Sheen or whether it was he who made the Catholic Hour. In any event, the two are bracketed together in the minds of most people.

As usual, Bishop Noll directed matters unobtrusively but firmly. It was his method too employ the finest possible personnel, and then give them free rein, stepping in only occasionally with a word of counsel. Rarely he was called on to withdraw the iron fist from the velvet glove, but that he could do very forcefully when the event demanded it.

2.

IT was in 1943 that the newly formed Blue Network offered Bishop Noll and the Men's Council a weekly half hour for another radio program. Back in the old days, N.B.C. had two chains known at the time as the Red and the Blue Network. But the Government made N.B.C. divest itself of its Blue Network. This was set up as an independent corporation, now known as The American Broadcasting Company.

Much less formal in its makeup than the Catholic Hour, "The Hour of Faith," as it is called, was inaugurated by Bishop Noll speaking from Chicago. It is slanted at all America as it relaxes in its easy chair over the Sunday papers. Scheduled Sundays at 11:30 a.m., Eastern Time, the program for some time included eighteen or twenty minutes of good music for organ, harp and violin, with a male quartette helping out. The main feature, of course, is a good down-to-earth talk by some priest. In January, 1950 a dialogue discussion was begun on this program.

In 1945, The Mutual Broadcasting System decided to re-arrange its religious programs according to a pattern that would make them a daily feature, Monday through Friday, from 10:15 to 10:30 in the morning. Catholics and Jews were each to have one slice of this time each week—hardly a just portion, since there are roughly 30,000,000 Catholics in the country and only 40,-

000,000 or so professed Protestants, and only 5,000,000 Jews, with the rest of the population entirely unchurched. But Mutual made the common mistake of assuming that if a person is not a Catholic he must be by that very fact a Protestant.

This network first asked Notre Dame University to provide speakers and take care of the clerical details. But the Fathers at Notre Dame did not consider such a work compatible with the purpose of their school. They suggested instead that Mutual consult with *Our Sunday Visitor.*

In collaboration with Bishop Noll, Bishop Sheen worked out a format which he called "The Spiritual Clinic." Listeners would be invited to submit their problems for discussion over the radio—all names being withheld, of course. Such a program could do immense good. The enunciation of general ethical principles and their particular application would help anyone who happened to be listening in, while hundreds of people would have access to expert moral counsel merely for the price of a three-cent stamp.

Bishop Sheen opened the program for *Our Sunday Visitor* in September, 1945. At the end of his commitment, Bishop Noll took it over, to be succeeded by Dr. John A. O'Brien of Notre Dame, Father Gillis, the present writer, and so on, through a long list of distinguished and able churchmen.

But the program finally cracked up on the rocks of censorship. Bishop Noll, for instance, received a bona-fide query from a nurse regarding euthanasia. After building an eight-minute talk on the principles involved, he was told by Mutual that the subject was controversial and, as such, taboo. He had to write another talk for that broadcast.

It was found that while infidelity and divorce could form practically the whole plot of the "soap operas," such subjects were "in bad taste" on a religious program.

After a year of almost constant struggling against network restrictions, *Our Sunday Visitor* and Mutual parted company by common consent. But Bishop Noll found the program thrown right back into his lap when M.B.S. invited the Men's Council to take it over. This time, however, he let his subordinates work out the details. They dropped the "Spiritual Clinic" idea and substituted a conventional religious talk, "along broad lines of general interest to people of all creeds," as the networks are accustomed to say.

These activities are financed in the main through voluntary contributions from the listeners. Occasionally Bishop Sheen will offer a little souvenir to those who write in for it. Such an offer brings in letters, literally, in tens of thousands, a majority of them enclosing offerings which the Bishop very generously turns over to the Council. These funds have more than once pulled the Council out of debt and built up a cash balance for them.

3.

IN 1942, Bishop Noll saw the Men's Council take over the Narberth Movement—an apostolate he had long admired.

To sketch its history, one must go back to those dismal days of the Smith-Hoover campaign with the loathsome outbreak of bigotry described in a previous chapter.

A little group of laymen in St. Margaret's Parish, Narberth—right outside of Philadelphia—decided to meet the situation, locally, at least, by writing leaflets explaining the most misunderstood phases of Catholic beliefs

and practices. They would have these printed up in an attractive format, and then mail them to a selected list of the key-men in their community: councilmen, school directors, clergymen, physicians, lawyers, etc.

A professional advertising man, Karl Rogers, offered to do the writing, and it instantly developed that he had a flair for the work amounting almost to genius. His writing was deft—touched with whimsy. It blew a draft of fresh air through the whole field of popular Catholic apologetics.

As the months passed, Rogers became increasingly absorbed in the work until he had taken it practically into his own hands and was giving all his time to it—the writing, printing and distribution of his charming leaflets.

Naturally, the idea spread, and before long he was getting requests for information and orders for the leaflets from all over the country.

One day, in Parkersburg, West Virginia, someone thought of asking a local editor just to print Rogers' essays week by week on his Saturday church page. That would save so much trouble in the way of addressing envelopes, licking flaps, and buying stamps. The editor agreed, and with that the apostolate entered a more fruitful phase.

By 1942, Rogers had built up a syndicate of about two hundred papers—a few of them metropolitan dailies, most of them small-town weeklies—all of them featuring his essays.

Rogers died in September of that year, leaving a widow who later entered the Order of the Visitation and is now known as Sister Magdalene.

Such a work could not be left to fall apart. Indeed, before his death, Karl had made it clear that it was to

go to the Men's Council for continuance. He had already talked it over with the Executive Secretary and the matter had been cleared with Bishop Noll and the Board of Directors. Karl had also chosen the writer of this biography to take his place in the preparation of these essays—although the writer did not know it at the time. It was Mrs. Rogers who recalled the fact and passed it on to the Men's Council for action.

Karl left precisely 102 articles—a two year supply. Since then 416 more have been written and the syndicate has approximately doubled, still under the energetic direction of the National Council of Catholic Men.

4.

THROUGH his work in the N.C.W.C., Bishop Noll had come to realize more and more the national demand for a specific center in the country where Catholic doctrines could be explained to all who had any questions on religious matters. The experience of the Smith Campaign would have been enough to prove such a need, but even after that there was a great body of queries received at N.C.W.C. concerning matters specifically Catholic. They made every effort possible to comply with the demand for information, but they were not set up to develop all the possibilities.

In the pages of *Our Sunday Visitor* and *The Priest* throughout the end of the 1940's, Bishop Noll kept hammering at the idea of a National Catholic Information Bureau, to be located preferably at N.C.W.C. headquarters in Washington. He needled the clergy with little items in the "Currente Calamo" column, soliciting opinions and striving to create interest. Then with a full-dress editorial in the issue of October, 1948, he discussed the matter in detail, telling of how effectively some of the anti-Catholic forces were marshalled, warn-

ing that "the children of light should not be less wise than the children of darkness."

The editorial caught the eye of John Hinkel, formerly with *The New York Times* for nine years, then with Notre Dame University as its publicity director. He took the article, and using it as his guide, wrote a five-page report on how such a Bureau could be organized. It was a fine discussion of the need for such information, to combat the most dangerous enemy of the Church—ignorance.

Many of these matters had been raised and discussed before this, of course, but Mr. Hinkel was the first to assemble and correlate the possibilities in a workable form. He reduced speculation to the concrete with a practical plan.

"In a nation in which Catholics make up one-fifth of the population, the proportion of Catholic news in daily newspapers averages less than one-tenth.

"An increase in secular newspaper and magazine articles unfriendly to the Catholic Church has been noted recently. Much of this is due to the fact that such media usually have no center or source of information from which to obtain authentic Catholic teaching or the Catholic side of controversial subjects . . .

"The Catholic Church today is the only major religious body in this country without an official information agency. Leading Protestant denominations have well-organized, well-staffed, and well-financed bureaus or departments to service secular communications media. Jewish information, and the handling of misrepresentations of Jewish matters, are taken care of by Jewish Community Councils and by such organizations as B'nai B'rith. The most conspicuous example of success in this field is the Christian Science Church. In each of the forty-eight states and the District of Columbia there

is a Christian Science Committee on Publication, composed of professional information personnel. Their principal functions are to disseminate information to secular communications media about Christian Science matters, and to act on unfavorable references to their religion in those media . . .

"The answer to this challenge of today," he concluded, "would be a Department of Public Information at the National Catholic Welfare Conference in Washington, D. C., tied into a chain of diocesan information centers in every diocese . . ."

The functions of the center would be:

1. Close liaison with wire services, correspondents of major newspapers, radio networks, and other national secular communications media; servicing them with news releases on major Church matters; answering queries and correcting misinformation about the Church; providing research facilities to supply requested information; suggesting features, broadcasts, articles concerning Catholic matters; checking stories dealing with the Church.
2. Establishing close liaison with dioceses on information matters; providing dioceses with up-to-date lists of any anti-Catholic organizations, publications, and personalities; advising and assisting dioceses in organizing and operating information offices; and advising in the organization of public-relations or information-advisory committees in each diocese, composed of prominent laymen.
3. Maintaining current research files on Catholic matters for the use of secular and Catholic communications media.
4. Forming panels of easily accessible experts on important Catholic subjects, to provide accurate and timely information wherever needed.
5. Providing advisory service on public information for the use of Bishops, N.C.W.C. officials, etc.
6. Publicizing newsworthy activities of N.C.W.C.
7. Editing a monthly magazine devoted to the work.

8. Recommending means of improving the moral tone of secular communications media, notably in news stories dealing with crime, divorce, etc.
9. Assisting Catholics to gain employment in secular communications media.

As the organization grew it could broaden and increase its activities, till it was able to present the Catholic position on affairs concerning the Church to the papers, to national and state legislators, etc. Especially dear to Bishop Noll, the journalist, was the proposal to prepare a regular news clipsheet on major Catholic matters to be handed to key personnel in secular newspapers, magazines, and radio. There was room too, for a survey to determine average non-Catholic opinions of the Church, what non-Catholics might like to know about the Church, spheres of possible tension, and the like.

Commenting on the proposal, Neil MacNeil of *The New York Times* pointed out that, in his experience, "the secular press goes wrong on Catholic information largely because the information is not available to it . . . I have never known personally of an editor who misrepresented the Catholic Church who did not think he was presenting the true facts about it in doing so, and was considerably embarrassed when it was pointed out later that he had misrepresented twenty-five million of his fellow-citizens.

"This service should be a twenty-four-hour-a-day affair. The great difficulty I encounter as a news editor with the Catholic Church is that its information is not available when I must have the information. Most Catholic authorities work bankers' hours, whereas most of the news is dealt with after seven o'clock at night, and major news stories may be handled late at night. Not only is this true of morning papers, but it is also

true of afternoon papers. First editions of the latter are usually gotten up from 1:00 a.m. on. For a Catholic information service to be truly effective it should be available through a telephone call all hours of the day; and even in the early hours of the morning the man in charge of the service should be able to get in touch with some spokesman of the Church in order to set the newspapers right on the subject in the news.

"The service should not wait for somebody to come to it for information. It should have ticker service from Associated Press, United Press, International News Service, and follow the flow of news every hour by day and night. Then, when a story affecting Catholics is breaking, get their position on the particular subject and communicate it to the newspapers. Thus, the correct Catholic position would be published at the proper time, and Catholics would have less bother trying to catch up with the necessary corrections."

The question of financing the project was a moot point. The most conservative estimate for the cost of such a project came from Mr. Hinkel, who estimated that twenty-five thousand dollars would be the amount needed to start, while MacNeil favored as large a fund as one hundred thousand dollars. The Bishops, home missions, and interested services, he thought, should be called on to furnish the money to run the Information Bureau.

Mr. MacNeil was particularly vehement on one subject, the question of whether to charge a fee for the services rendered: "I would invite everybody and every publication to come to you for accurate information on the Catholic position with the assurance that they would get it free. Even a small fee would shut out some people from the truth, and that is not what you want."

Hinkel had the plan mimeographed, and Bishop Noll

carried it with him to the annual meeting of the Hierarchy. The copies were distributed, and Bishop Noll took the floor to explain it. When he had finished he received the warm approval of his fellow Bishops, and a committee headed by the late Archbishop McNicholas of Cincinnati was appointed to study the matter. A few months later the committee announced the appointment of Msgr. Thomas J. McCarthy, editor of the Los Angeles *Tidings* to organize and head the Information Bureau—a very wise choice indeed. Msgr. McCarthy, a dynamic journalist with a splendid sense of news value, had made his *Tidings* into one of the leading Catholic papers in the country. His main worry, financial, was taken care of by *Our Sunday Visitor,* when it agreed to underwrite most of the expenses. It still does.

It might be said here, in passing, that when Father Burke, as General Secretary of the N.C.W.C., suggested that the name of the Council organ be changed, Bishop Noll recommended the caption *Catholic Action,* and his proposal was accepted. It had previously borne the title *N.C.W.C. Bulletin.*

The Most Rev. Michael J. Ready, D.D., Bishop of Columbus and former Executive Secretary of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, was one of the speakers at the banquet honoring Bishop Noll on his silver jubilee as a member of the episcopate, observed in Fort Wayne June 29, 1950. He responded to the toast "Our Jubilarian and the NCWC." The text of his talk follows:

By way of anomaly it is interesting to point out that John Francis Noll actually served the NCWC before it was established. He has continued to serve it with unflagging devotion and extraordinary generosity to this present day.

Father Noll was a member of a General Committee on Catholic Affairs and Interests which met at Notre Dame University in July, 1919. The Committee's purpose was to prepare for the organization of what was to be the National Catholic Welfare Council. At the Notre Dame meeting, Father Noll's name led the list of signers of a report on the Catholic Press which was submitted to the Meeting of the Hierarchy at the Catholic University in September, 1919. It was at that historic meeting of the Bishops that the NCWC was founded.

Since Bishop Noll's name down the years has been identified as the providing angel for so many great Catholic projects, it is highly significant that in 1919 he wrote the report that outlined a method of financing a nationally representative Press and Literature Committee for the proposed NCWC. Eventually this Committee became the highly successful Press Department of the Conference with its world-wide NC news coverage.

Throughout the intervening years, Father Noll participated in the affairs of the Press and Literature Committee and soon after his Episcopal Consecration he was invited by the Administrative Board of Bishops to advise the members on matters pertaining to the betterment and extension of the Catholic Press. In 1930 Bishop Noll was chosen to represent the NCWC at the famous International Catholic Week in Geneva.

In 1931 he was first elected a member of the Administrative Board and began then the long and distinguished service which, with the exception of only a few years, continues to this happy day of Silver Jubilee. Throughout most of that long period, Bishop Noll acted as Secretary of the Board and held the important Chairmanship of the Lay Organizations Department.

The beloved Bishop's achievements in his various

Bishop Noll preaching at the dedication of the Statue of Christ, Light of the World. It is a 22 foot bronze statue, erected in front of the N.C.W.C. building in Washington. It was dedicated by Archbishop Cicognani, Apostolic Delegate.

His Eminence, Samuel Cardinal Stritch, preaching in the Fort Wayne Cathedral, on the occasion of Bishop Noll's Silver Jubilee in the Episcopate.

Bishop Noll speaking at the banquet, following his Pontifical Jubilee Mass, June 29, 1950. At right is Bishop William O'Brien, Auxiliary of Chicago and director of the Catholic Church Extension Society, who served as toastmaster.

Bishop Noll with sisters and brothers on occasion of a Victory-Noll observance of his golden Sacerdotal Jubilee.

assignments throughout those years are known by this rejoicing audience. The very statement of the groupings of years of that service indicate the importance and quality of the great leadership of the Bishops of the Administrative Board in which he participated. The first term of Bishop Noll's service on the Board was from 1930 to 1937. In this period the Church was concerned by the fierce anti-Catholic persecutions in Mexico. Pius XI issued the notable encyclicals on Christian Marriage, Capital and Labor, Catholic Action and Education in those years and their principles were emphasized for our own country by Bishops' statements and pastorals. It was the time of the bloody Spanish Civil War with its serious impacts in this nation. A Holy Year, two international Eucharistic Congresses, the challenging forces of Nazism and Fascism in Germany and Italy; the social and economic crisis represented by the great depression, the beginnings of the school controversy, dangerous developments in the moral field as film and literature indecency increased, birth control and sterilization campaigns and the rampant atheism of Communism put the Church on a wide and critical offensive front.

Bishop Noll's second tour of duty as a member of the Administrative Board was from 1941-1946. This was the period of world crisis with its scores of critical situations for the Church throughout the world as well as in our country. Much of the bases for radical changes and the emergence of tremendous religious moral and civic problems appeared in this period. Likewise, there was much of the laying of the ground work for the determined effort to solve these problems and to chart post war courses for the Church and the nation.

Bishop Noll served on the NCWC Administrative Board of Bishops throughout those historic years and serves presently as the Board's Secretary. During this

time, too, Bishop Noll, in 1933, was a charter member of the Bishop's Committee on Motion Pictures which launched the Legion of Decency. In 1938, the tireless, resourceful Bishop of Fort Wayne outlined the need of combating salacious books and magazines and was named Chairman of the Bishops' Committee which founded the National Organization for Decent Literature.

In these necessarily sketchy paragraphs on the Bishop's relations with the NCWC, I shall find it difficult to speak briefly on the subject of Bishop Noll's part in making possible the monumental building in Washington whose ninety-foot striking facade enshrines the statue of Christ, the Light of the World, and whose structural facilities serve as the headquarters of the multiple activities for the Church and nation identified with the world famous monogram NCWC. Bishop Noll started a campaign in the *Our Sunday Visitor* in 1936, at the request of a good lady in Topeka, Kansas, to collect funds to place an imposing statue of Christ in the capital of the nation. The details of the campaign are well-known to you.

Some of the circumstances of the monument-building project stand out indelibly in my memory. I remember touring Washington and its environs with the Bishop on a couple muggy days in search of a satisfactory site for the monument. The suitable places, according to the District of Columbia Fine Arts Commission, were preempted by Caesar. There were no attractive Capital vistas open for Christ. We thought for some weeks that we could get the property across the street from the present NCWC. It converged at Thomas Circle from Massachusetts Avenue and N Street. It was tied up in an estate controversy and as far as I know it still is in litigation.

Our maneuverings around Massachusetts Avenue

brought us closer to the idea that the NCWC had good property on one of Washington's great avenues which could be the site for two excellent projects instead of one. I remember the keen interest of Bishop Noll in the suggestion that both monument and a new headquarters building could be erected on the NCWC site. The Bishops of the country, grateful for Bishop Noll's magnificent gift, on the hearty recommendation of the Administrative Board, agreed to provide the finances necessary to complete a modern nine story office building.

There are many other details which crowd my memory. One or two dramatic incidents such as riding the airways with one hundred and nineteen thousand dollars in securities from Fort Wayne to Oklahoma City to Chicago in exceptionally bad flying conditions. Bishop Noll gave me the securities to take to Bishop Francis Clement Kelley, the then Treasurer of the NCWC. Bishop Kelley endorsed them properly and sent me back to deposit them in Chicago. The night I arrived at the Chicago Airport the plane circled and circled for an anxious hour. It was the night of the fatal airliner crash at the Chicago Airport in 1939. Before leaving Oklahoma City, I had made an inventory of the securities and dispatched the copy to my office in Washington. For a while it seemed like a providential precaution. It would have been a tremendous catastrophe to crash when—for the first time in one's life you were fortunate to be carrying $119,000.

In these later years, Bishop Noll has increased the original gift by twenty thousand dollars and personally directed the fashioning of the beautiful Kormendi Christ, the Light of the World, which stands on the altaresque pedestal in the fluted ninety-foot groove of the massive stone facade.

Another generous and significant gift of the revered

Jubilarian guaranteed the reactivation and development in the NCWC of a service which daily grows more important for the Church in our Country. I refer to the Bureau of Information, whose program envisions accurate statements on Catholic belief, practice and interests, to all the media of publicity—papers, magazines, radio, television and to writers and commentators in such fields. The importance of this work may be gauged by the daily output in these agencies of inaccurate but friendly statements about Catholics or Catholic belief as well as the vicious and hostile charges which continue to form, as Chesterton remarked, "a halo of hatred about the Church of God."

In offering our affectionate congratulations to Bishop Noll for his long and distinguished service to the NCWC, we hail him as an indomitable Defender of Truth and a courageous Promoter of Justice in our American society. In the foyer of the NCWC building there is a bronze representation of Bishop Noll and a dedicatory legend which may be recited today with special appropriateness of the Bishop's life and works. The legend reads:

"To the Most Rev. John F. Noll, D.D., Bishop of Fort Wayne, Member of the Administrative Board, National Catholic Welfare Conference, through whose zeal for Christ, the Light of the World, this monument was conceived and whose generous assistance made possible its erection in the year of Our Lord, 1941."

May Bishop Noll live long to continue building monuments of love and service to Christ and to His Holy Church and may God's sweet consolations abide with him forever. May the merits which he has won from God gain for all of us a good measure of the zeal for the Church which the great Bishop of Fort Wayne has practiced throughout his life.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Further European Travels

EVERY five years, unless formally excused, each Bishop is obliged to visit Rome, pay his respects to the Vicar of Christ, and make a report on the condition of his diocese. The passage of centuries has added to the visit the custom of going to four of the Roman basilicas, there to pray for the intentions of the Holy Father, and further custom has established the fourth and ninth year of each decade as the time for the American Bishops' visit "to the threshold of the Apostles." So in 1929 Bishop Noll found himself en route for Europe with a group of about a dozen Catholics, including three priests and two of his sisters.

At Cherbourg, where they docked first, he left the party for a few moments to send some cables, and when he returned he found one of his bags left open by the Customs Office, with a Customs Official looking his magnificent best, flourishing a small box which had been delivered to the Bishop while he was aboard, a box which he had not yet had time to open. It contained cigars which had not been declared. Two hundred and thirty francs to redeem them, please! He paid the charge and the port was cleared. The party traveled in two large Cadillac limousines provided by a friend at Brussels and headed first for Lisieux.

Once there, they started for the convent where St. Thérèse had lived out her short, marvelous life. The superior of the convent was the sister of St. Thérèse. Father Noll was presented with an authentic photograph of the saint, and through the kindness of a

French-speaking priest, was able to talk with the Prioress through a grille for about fifteen minutes. When they had finished speaking she asked that he do her a favor and, after obtaining his consent, she sent out a package for him to deliver to the Pope. It was a big bulky thing. Through the wrapping it felt like a bundle of large candles, and yet it did not seem to have the weight for that. Since the Bishop was not expecting to arrive in Rome for another month, one of the ladies of his party volunteered to stow it in her trunk.

They left Lisieux the following day to begin a long and twisting trip by auto through western and southern France stopping at Orleans, Tours, Lourdes, Lyons, Montpelier, Carcasonne, Marsailles and Nice. Thence over several ranges of the Alps to Como in northern Italy; finally to Milan, Turin, Venice, Florence and Rome. Bishop Noll immediately arranged for his audience with Pope Pius XI. They talked at length about the settlement of the Roman question, the Concordat just concluded with the Kingdom of Italy, but little about the affairs of Bishop Noll's diocese. Then the Bishop told His Holiness that he had a dozen people with him, including some priests, waiting for his blessing in the next room. It was in this room that he handed over the package from Lisieux.

"She is always sending me something," the Holy Father remarked, as he slipped the wrappings off the package. He removed one of the twelve big cardboard mailing tubes—these had felt like candles—and from it took out a large picture of St. Thérèse as "Patroness of the Missions." It was the first release of these new pictures.

The Pope inspected it carefully, and remarked "Now I must begin the distribution." He then passed among

the twelve kneeling people and handed each one. When he finished and they had arisen, Bishop Noll turned to the Pontiff and observed,

"But, Your Holiness, you've left me without a souvenir from Lisieux."

"Never mind, Your Excellency," said the Holy Father with a smile, "you'll have your souvenir."

The party left the Papal chambers and returned to the hotel. That same evening a messenger arrived with a package for Bishop Noll. It was from Pius XI—a beautiful marble plaque on an easel, containing a picture of the Little Flower, with a relic inserted near the base.

The party remained in Rome a few days longer, then moved by automobile through Switzerland, Germany, Holland, and Belgium.. They gave up the large limousine at Brussels, whence Bishop Noll left his party—they crossing the channel to visit England and Ireland, and he going to North Germany to visit an aged retired priest of his diocese. The Bishop had covered the whole of the British Isles, including Ireland, in 1924.

2.

THE year following his episcopal visit to Rome gave Bishop Noll a chance to see Europe again. It was the year when the Church celebrated the ninth centenary of the death of St. Emeric, son of St. Stephen, Patron of Hungary. In honor of his feast, a pilgrimage of American Hungarians was arranged, and these chose Bishop Noll as their Chaplain. The owners of the *Europa* gave the Bishop the best accommodations they had—gratis.

They moved swiftly across Europe, and visited Budapest for three weeks. The fame of Bishop Noll

had traveled just a bit ahead of him, and he found himself heralded in the city as a publisher of one of the most influential newspapers in the United States, one that might go far to help the cause of Hungarian freedom—for the country was still manacled by the Treaty of Versailles.

From Budapest he travelled by train to Szeged. Halfway there he was amazed to find a group of reporters boarding the train for an interview. But when he arrived at Szeged, he was met by at least ten thousand people gathered at the station with the local Bishop, the Mayor, his Council, and other dignitaries waiting with them. There were floral offerings, and he was addressed in Hungarian, Latin, English—it seemed like a new Pentecost. In a car provided by the Mayor, Bishop Noll rode in a long procession, with his fellow Bishop, the Chief of Police, and officials.

The affair was rather too big for him even to begin to understand, and his confusion became greater that night when it seemed that the whole city came to the Bishop's residence, thousands of them carrying Chinese lanterns. Standing before an upstairs window he addressed them through an interpreter. When it was over and they had left, Bishop Noll began to inquire about the cause of the reception he had been accorded. He discovered then that Father Nemeth, one of his own priests from Gary, had been through the town shortly before, and had apparently spent all his time giving the Bishop such a tremendous build-up that the townspeople felt bound to turn themselves inside out for the American prelate, but also entertaining the hope that he might assist in having the League of Nations allow the Plebiscite promised to the Hungarian people.

The centenary celebration took the form of a

Eucharistic Congress. There were Field Masses attended by a hundred thousand people, and a procession miles long with the participants walking ten abreast. The procession was to escort the proudest possession of the nation, the "Holy Dexter," the right forearm of St. Stephen, enclosed in a precious reliquary and preserved through nine centuries.

The address of welcome to the Holy Father's Cardinal Legate and the visiting prelates was delivered on the eve of the Congress by Count Apponi, a man with a sweeping beard, eighty-six years old, Hungary's representative at the League of Nations. Bishop Noll was fascinated at hearing the Count speak eloquently in Ciceronian Latin. Using no manuscript, he rose from one period to another, his voice ringing through the vast hall with sonorous cadence. Afterwards, as he stood in line to compliment the speaker, Bishop Noll heard the aged statesman answer each prelate as he was addressed, in his own language, whether in German, French, Polish, Spanish, English—or any of the other languages of Europe. When the Count learned that Bishop Noll was an American publisher, he invited him to attend a session of the League of Nations when Hungary's case would be brought before that body. The Bishop accepted a pass to the press box in Geneva—and used it a month later.

After the Congress in Hungary was ended the Bishop toured much of Europe before returning home. From Hungary he went to Vienna, to Prague, to Cracow, Czestokowa, and thence south through Germany to a little town in the diocese of Regensburg, the town of Konnersreuth in Bavaria, where lived one of the most celebrated and controversial women of the twentieth century—Theresa Neumann.

The case of Theresa Neumann has recently been discounted by a few Catholic writers. Briefly, her story is this:

It first came to the public attention when her body began to show external marks that could not be ignored. For she had received on her body the wounds of Christ inflicted before and during His death on the cross.

These outward signs began on March 4, 1926, when she had a vision of Christ suffering in the Garden of Gethsemani. After she came out of that ecstatic vision, she found a wound opened in her side, bleeding so profusely that she had to tell her sister, Crescentia, begging her not to tell their mother. On the following Friday she had a vision of the passion which lasted from Thursday midnight till Friday at noon, during which time the wound in her side bled copiously. On the Friday of Passion Week, shortly following, there appeared a wound in her hands, and from midnight Holy Thursday until past noon Friday she witnessed in a vision the whole passion, this vision continuing until three in the afternoon.

The whole thing was too much for her parents. They did not consider the possibility of mystical phenomena but told the local pastor that Theresa was apparently dying of some strange malady. He came on each of these Friday mornings, saw the same transfixed ecstasies, the same recovery from the brink of death when the visions had passed. And shortly after the visions of that first Good Friday, when she murmured of intense pain in her hands and feet, it was discovered that she bore the marks of the nails in her hands and feet, and the mark of the spear in her side.

For weeks the wounds were open and bled frequently—the parents still baffled. In fact, they called phy-

sicians in the hope of having the wounds healed. Theresa prayed to the Little Flower, who had previously appeared to her and told her that a special kind of suffering awaited her. The result was that the wounds on hands and feet were shortly covered with new skin.

On the First Friday of November, 1926, three wounds appeared on her head, corresponding to the wounds caused by the thorns on Christ's head, and these also bled freely. Two weeks later the head wounds increased to eight, and the visions of that day seemed especially taxing, her breathing scarcely perceptible. Yet on the following Sunday she was up and around.

From that day on she suffered with Christ each Friday, except during the glorious and joyful seasons, the blood flowing from her side, and through her eyes; in Lent the blood flowed from her hands and feet, as well as from a severe wound in her shoulder corresponding to the mark dug into Christ's shoulder by the weight of the cross. And even today whenever, in her vision, she witnesses the scourging at the pillar, she bleeds from her back, as did Christ.

The fame of Theresa began to spread. From local gossip it became first a national issue, then a matter of international interest. She is still one of the most controversial figures of modern times. It is most interesting, because in her case the possibility of auto-suggestion as an explanation has been completely rejected for three reasons:

The first is a psychological reason. She had no desire for the wounds in the first place. She has suffered from them to a degree that could not possibly be described here. They were a source of spiritual pain, too,

for her parents went through a veritable hell before they realized that this was no ordinary affliction transfixing their daughter in these ecstasies.

The second reason for the ruling out of auto-suggestion is far more convincing. Since those first visions Theresa has neither eaten nor drunk any particle of food except the Host which she receives daily in Holy Communion. That Host would not keep a person alive a day longer. And this is not a pious rumor. It is a fact that has been proved time and again, proved by people who came convinced that Theresa was a liar, but who left knowing that they had been in the presence of an unexplainable, probably supernatural, mystery.

The third reason is even more convincing than the second, and it is one that no fraud could possibly perpetrate. In her ecstasies Theresa has spoken words in languages whose existence she did not even suspect. Most astounding of these linguistic feats—if they may so be designated—was her speaking in Aramaic, the language used through the eastern world in the days of Christ. Scholars came to Konnersreuth and copied down the words as she spoke them, for she had no memory of them when she came out of her ecstasy. At first they were astounded, then from the body gathered there came a cry. They had discovered she was a fake; she had used wrong words, they said—close to the real thing, indeed, but not pure Aramaic. But later they had to retract.

In a small city in Palestine one of the leading Aramaic scholars of the twentieth century had been working out possible corrupt forms of the language, forms that might arise as the influences of other languages were pressed close about it. When he read of

Theresa's deviation from the pure Aramaic of the book he rushed his own report through to the men who had condemned her. His forms of the words corresponded exactly with hers in nearly every case, and where they differed he agreed that he would eventually have reached the form she had given as he studied the possible corruptions of the language further. From these notes there has been a new study of the language, with an attempt to locate the various dialect forms possible in the time of Christ.

The answer to the whole phenomenon of Theresa Neumann rests squarely in the hands of God. No human agency could possibly explain the wonders. They are far beyond humanity. The Church will make no official statement as to its opinion—though Pius XI made it plain before his death that he saw the hand of God at work in Konnersreuth—but the Church does not ignore the evidence. The works of the devil are deceit and evil; the works of God are truth and good. From that village of Konnersreuth there have come no works of evil. If the devil is working there, he is most certainly a very silly fellow indeed, for he has driven thousands of souls back to God, after they had left the presence of this woman shaking with fear and wonderment.

While visiting the former American Passionists, then working in the Archdiocese of Vienna, Bishop Noll told them of the itinerary just ahead of him, which included a stop at Konnersreuth. The two priests immediately answered that they wanted to get a special concession from the Bishop of Regensburg for him because they had lived in the same house with him when he was Auxiliary Bishop to Cardinal Faulhaber in Munich. They knew him well, and he would grant them any reasonable favor. Hence one of the priests wrote to the Bishop

of Regensburg to say that the Bishop of Fort Wayne, Indiana, and the editor of *Our Sunday Visitor*, would be at Konnersreuth on the first Thursday of August and requested the Bishop to have Father Naber and Mr. Neumann allow the Bishop a private visit with Theresa on Thursday evening, and then to permit him to spend all of Friday morning in her room. (Other visitors are permitted to observe her only during one ecstasy, lasting usually from three to five minutes.) She sees the entire passion of Our Lord in more than thirty ecstasies, and on the First Friday of the month, the visions are continued much longer than other Fridays. On other Fridays the ecstasies come to an end with the vision of Christ's death. But on the First Friday, as you will recall, the Gospel speaks of the Roman soldiers breaking the bones of the thieves. They would have broken those of Christ if they had not noted that He had died. Then came the opening of the side with the spear, etc. Theresa witnesses these wicked cruelties and they almost kill her.

The Bishop's interview the night before lasted an hour and twenty minutes. He had expected to find her in bed, but she was up and met him at the door. She wore gloves over the marks of the Stigmata, but at his request she removed one so that he could see the wounds for himself. They held the talk in a big room on the second floor, erected especially to accommodate the large number of visitors who came every Friday. The Neumann residence had previously been only one story, but the girl felt the need of more privacy.

When he was finished, Bishop Noll returned to the home of Father Naber, pastor of the village, and guide and confessor of Theresa from her early childhood. There he also met Doctor Fritz Gerlich, editor of a Munich daily paper, long a student of mysticism, who

had obtained permission from the Bishop of Regensburg to observe Theresa week after week. The doctor was not a Catholic, then, but later was received into the Church, with Theresa witnessing the baptism. He was a prominent anti-Nazi, murdered finally by the Hitler regime in 1941. Between the two of them, they told the Bishop all they knew about Theresa.

Each week she went through the passion, from Thursday midnight till afternoon on Friday. Each week it was a new experience with her, and each part of the horrible experience came to her as a distinct shock, for the memory of what had happened, as she had learned early in childhood, or of what had happened the previous Friday, was gone. Even the kiss of Judas she greeted each week with a smile, and murmured "a friend of Jesus," not knowing that it was the kiss of treason until she saw what happened later. Yet in her normal waking hours the mention of his name would make her shudder.

While Bishop Noll was with Father Naber on Thursday afternoon, an English physician, a member of the commission which examines reputed miracles at the famous Shrine of Lourdes, called asking him and Father Naber to use their influence to permit him to spend a half hour in her room during her Friday morning ecstasies. The physician had made the request of Theresa's father, but he said that since he receives so many such requests he could not grant it.

But Bishop Noll called on Mr. Neumann to remind him that this man came not of his own accord, but as a delegate of a commission from Lourdes, and that he would be expected to return with something more than "hearsay." Mr. Neumann agreed to allow him to sit in

the room with the Bishop (who was the only one in the room for the whole morning period) for twenty minutes.

From Lourdes he had brought two chips of stone, one from the rock on which Mary appeared to Bernadette, and the other from the spot on the pavement where Bernadette knelt during the apparitions. When his twenty minutes were up he was asked to leave, so he handed the pieces of stone to Bishop Noll, and requested him to tell Theresa what they were.

"Wouldn't it be better if you asked her to identify them?" the Bishop asked.

"I'd like to, but my time is up."

The Bishop spoke to Father Naber, who was directing the pilgrims in groups of ten, from the head of the stairway, and he gave permission for the doctor to remain a few minutes longer. He walked with the Bishop to the bed where Theresa lay, and saw the girl's reaction when the Bishop put the stones in the palm of her left hand. Immediately she touched each one with the forefinger of her right hand.

"Ah," she murmered reverently, "this is from the place where the Blessed Virgin appeared, and this other is from the place where the little girl knelt."

The doctor's mouth opened, but he merely shook his head in amazement and said, "This redeems my long trip."

The Austrian Passionist Fathers had given Bishop Noll a relic of their founder, St. Paul of the Cross, and it now occurred to him that Theresa should have this relic. As she came out of one of her visions he placed it in her hand.

"Oh," she said, "this is a relic of one who had such great devotion to the Passion of Our Lord."

3.

FROM Konnersreuth Bishop Noll passed to Oberammergau, where every ten years a great commemoration of the Passion of Our Lord has been held for centuries. But after the intensity of his days with Theresa, the Bishop could feel little enthusiasm over the Passion Play or visiting the homes of the actors, though he did appreciate the kindness of the local pastor who not only gave him so much time, showing him about the village, but insisted that he be his house-guest.

From Oberammergau he travelled to Munich and entrained for Switzerland, first to visit the aged Archbishop of Chur, who had visited him on a tour of the United States. The great festival day at Einsiedeln was approaching, and the Archbishop had planned to attend the celebration. Bishop Noll acompanied him and was selected to pontificate at the Mass in the monastery church, erected and equipped nearly 1,000 years ago by St. Meinrad and his monks. The Mass was to be at four in the morning.

On the eve of the feast there was a mystery play, much like that of Oberammergau, performed only once in five years. The stage was the inclining stone pavement extending fully one hundred yards in all directions from the entrance to the church. This square was beautifully illuminated, while the spectators sat on chairs beyond the pavement in the surrounding darkness.

The play itself portrayed the whole history of the creation, of the fall of man, the migration of peoples, the founding of cities, and the development of civilization until the present era—and what is assumed will be its course until the end of the world. It ended with Christ appearing in judgment, the separation of the good

from the bad, and the beginning of eternity. Like the villagers of Oberammergau, the monks have never allowed their play to be filmed, but Bishop Noll was convinced that it would do a great good if it could be produced for showing on the American screen.

The monastery at Einsiedeln impressed him deeply. Founded by St. Meinrad in the tenth century, it has been pronounced "the perfect monastery." Its long corridors were covered with art works, all produced by members of the community. The altars, the choir-stalls, the pews, the vestment cases, the baptistry, practically everything that graced the glorious church, was the handiwork of the good Benedictines, who have peopled it and made its halls resound through long ages with the melodious praise of Almighty God.

From Einsiedeln he continued his journey to Geneva, where he had been invited to attend a session of the League of Nations and to participate in a Catholic Seminar that was to be held at the same time in that city. At the Seminar were to be gathered some of greatest Catholic writers of the day—each to speak for the Catholics of his country on succeeding nights. There were Archbishop Baudrillart from France, Giovanni Papini from Italy, Sigrid Undset representing the Scandinavian Catholics, Monsignor Seipel, representing Austria, Frank Sheed, appearing for England, a famous Jesuit, for Germany, and Bishop Noll, for the United States.

All the speeches except those delivered by the Bishop and Frank Sheed were in French. The substance of their talks had been turned into French before time, then read to the audience after their delivery in English —and what an audience! It was made up almost entirely

of the delegates to the League of Nations as well as the principal Catholic representatives of many nations.

Bishop Noll made it a point to be on hand at the League of Nations Assembly when his friend, Count Apponi, took the floor on behalf of Hungary. M. Briand of France was at the head of the table as Chairman, with Anthony Eden serving as Secretary. All business was done in French and English.

In his paper Count Apponi reminded the League that his country had been promised a plebiscite after ten years, that these years had elapsed, and that the demands of his people for that plebiscite had not only been ignored but opposed by the League.

After his paper was finished—it had been read in French—the same plea was brought before the delegates in English. Anthony Eden next moved that the paper be accepted but tabled. That was done, as Count Apponi had earlier predicted in a conversation with Bishop Noll.

With the witnessing of this session, there was no further business to keep him in Europe. He would not have remained as long as he had, but he felt that the Catholic Week in Geneva was well worth the time he had given it. Now that it was over, and with his diocese calling him to return, he made haste to depart from Switzerland. He took a train to Hamburg, and boarded the *Bremen* for a swift passage to New York and home.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

The Legion Of Decency

EARLY in the '30's, the late Archbishop John Cantwell of Los Angeles stood before the Bishops at their annual meeting in Washington and read a report that crystallized what most of his fellow-Bishops had been thinking for many years. They were deeply concerned about the movies—Archbishop Cantwell, perhaps most of all, because the great majority of all the pictures in circulation were being filmed in Hollywood, right in his own back yard, so to speak.

A report had only recently been issued by the Department of the Interior, incorporating the results of a survey of the movies, taken at the expense of the Payne Fund. It disclosed that three out of every four pictures dealt with crime, sex, and unwholesome romance; that practically all the children of the United States were going to the movies at least once a week, and that they were being profoundly influenced in the formation of their philosophy of life by what they saw on the silver screen.

Archbishop Cantwell reminded the Bishops that prior to the depression, a hundred million Americans were making a weekly trip to the movies; that even during the depression, with eleven to twelve million unemployed, weekly attendance never dropped below seventy million. Further, worldwide attendance at American-made pictures approximated two hundred and fifty million a week—all of which would have been pleasant and highly interesting if the movies were of moral help to the numerous spectators; but, as Arch-

bishop Cantwell pointed out, they were a great moral detriment.

About 90% of all motion pictures were turned out by nine companies with production headquarters in Hollywood: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Fox, Paramount, R. K. O., Warner Bros.—First National, Universal, Columbia and United Artists. Some 480 full-length features were being produced annually, together with 2,500 short subjects.

Production costs came to a hundred million dollars; another hundred million was being spent in promotion; and a third hundred million in sales and distribution costs.

At that time the United States had sixteen thousand theaters in operation. In the United States admissions averaged nineteen cents; elsewhere in the world, it was only fourteen.

The movie industry itself had tried self-censorship by voluntarily entering the so-called "Hays Association," under which they submitted to a code of standards with penalties for violations. This was administered by William H. Hays, a former Postmaster General of the United States.

At the time—March 31, 1931—Hays had told the press that

"The adoption of the Code marks the latest and greatest step taken by the motion picture industry in the direction of self-government, to the end that the entertainment, educational and informative value of the theatrical screen shall conform not only to the best standards of this art, but to the wholesome instincts of life."

Probably Mr. Hays was sincere, but the later antics of Hollywood were to stultify him completely. Only two months afterwards, an Episcopalian minister, the Rever-

end Clifford Gray Twombly, Rector of St. James Church, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, reported at the convention dinner of the Diocese of Central New York, in Syracuse, that, of 228 features released during the weeks following the adoption of the Hays Code:

"41 have been films of gangsters, racketeers, bandits, blackmailers, crooks and gamblers.

"27 have been films of prostitutes and mistresses.

"65 have been films of illicit relations, marital infidelities, dishonorable proposals, suggestive talk and all kinds of immoral situations—many of them rankly so!—and

"3 have been films in which the heroine gave up her virtue to 'save' another!"

Of 228 pictures, only 92 were morally unobjectionable.

In his report a year later, Archbishop Cantwell noted that

"The movies now discuss morals, divorce, free love, race suicide, unborn children, sexual relationships outside marriage, and 'double standards,' the relationship of sex to religion, marriage and its effect upon 'the freedom of women'—these and a dozen other kindred subjects have been injected into the talking picture . . .

"An examination of a number of the motion pictures recently released for public exhibition suggests that the entire motion picture industry has set itself to the task of seeing which company can produce the most vicious film. In great numbers of these recently exhibited pictures there is a definite attempt to create audience sympathy for the violation of the moral law. The subject matter of most of these offensive films deals with sex relations of every conceivable kind. Sin is condoned, false moral values are instilled in young and critical minds and thus is lowered both the public and the

private standards of conduct of all who see them. When the pictures are not vile *in toto*—the subject matter, presentation, photography, dialogue, action—the films are crowded with salacious details—smutty talk, obscene wit, offensive situations."

The Archbishop's concern was not Puritanism or scrupulosity. He was experiencing a reaction to Hollywood that was fairly world-wide. Bishop Noll later observed an article in *The London Times* of January 25, 1934, commending the improvement during that past year in British-produced films:

"By every post come letters from cinema-goers and exhibitors in the Dominion, which read something like this: 'Give us more and more British films. We are tired to death of the sex and gangster American pictures. Go on keeping your films clean . . .'

"We have no Mae West," the writer continued, "but if we did possess one it would be profitless to exploit her."

Equally strong protests were being raised in Australia—even in Egypt and India.

Typical of the positive, comparative, and superlative degrees of what would "get by the boards"—a sort of triple standard—were three versions of one picture. In the first filming, heroine visits hero in his apartment. Her clothes are scant and suggestive. This showing was for most of the American public. Version two shows the same visiting lady with a little more clothing—this filming for Ohio, Pennsylvania, and a few other states with higher standards. Version three shows the heroine, dressed decorously and modestly seated before the hero. This showing was for England and Ireland.

Archbishop Cantwell had been briefed on the situation by Joseph Breen, long an employee of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, and by

Martin Quigley, editor of several motion-picture magazines. Quigley, resident in New York, and Breen, in Hollywood, both of them good Catholics, had been worried over the situation. Not only was there the problem of morality, but the spectre of Federal censorship was lurking in the wings. They thought that the Catholic Church might be able to succeed where the Hays Office had failed—and with far less pain than if Uncle Sam were to step into the scene with fines, jail sentences, and all the other clanking paraphernalia of Federal law enforcement.

Now, as the Bishops focused their eyes on the problem, they saw that the movies, even at their best, are no prize—those huge palaces, "cathedrals of the masses," they have been called, those dark caverns that subtly substitute the mind of M. G. M. for the mind of Christ: the pictures requiring no brain power, everything done for the spectator, nothing left to the imagination, complete passivity save for the rhythmic swing of the jaw beneath a wad of chewing gum.

The children, particularly, were learning of life as a place in which the best people moved in Cadillacs and dressed in tuxedoes and evening gowns, in which all meals were eaten by candle-light under crystal chandeliers, in which all girls were beautiful—their hair in place even when they got up in the morning, in which no man had a crooked nose or decayed teeth.

They were learning how to make love and comport themselves on a date at an age when they should have been worrying over Jack and his beanstalk. Instead of concentrating on their studies or tumbling over a football field, here they were hunched up three or four hours at a time in a crowded and often germ-laden theater.

The Benedictine Father Richard Felix pointed out that

"Frequent attendance at shows and habitual association with the movie-going crowd has a deteriorating effect on even well-bred teen-agers, nullifying the influence of their own home life.

"Gang psychology with its intoxication for dangerous adventure can maneuver the Catholic boy or girl very quickly into a false, if not immoral position.

"This danger is infinitely increased," he added, "when young folks are accompanied by seductive 'dates.' Often enough the example of sensuous petting and evil-minded comments under cover of the semi-darkness of the theater, even more than the pictures on the screen, arouse the imagination and the lust of excitable adolescents, leading them into sin and eventually into an animal view of life."

2.

WHAT were the Bishops to do? Shepherd all Catholics from active or passive participation in the movies under threat of excommunication, such that no Catholic would be permitted to view much less to act in a commercial production?

There was a general discussion of Archbishop Cantwell's memorandum, ending in the election of a committee for further study of the question and suitable recommendations. The members of that committee were Archbishop Cantwell, of course; Bishop Boyle of Pittsburgh, then Episcopal chairman of N.C.W.C.'s Press Department; Bishop Noll; and the late Archbishop McNicholas of Cincinnati. It is noteworthy here that the Hierarchy chose these men not only for their natural acumen, but also because they saw that Bishop Boyle and Bishop Noll were in a position to train the spotlight of the Catholic press on whatever program might be adopted.

In the summer of 1933, the Committee met at the home of Archbishop McNicholas. Joseph Breen and Martin Quigley were also on hand for consultation. Quigley told the Bishops that for several years he had been having Masses offered for the intention that the Lord might inspire the Hierarchy to act on the problem. Since Bishops seldom get to the movies, they were not nearly as familiar with the evil as the laity.

At that Cincinnati meeting Archbishop McNicholas was chosen chairman of the committee. It was decided that a "Legion of Decency" should be organized, that a Board of Review should be set up in Hollywood, to pass on scripts submitted; a second in New York would classify all pictures in relation to their moral color. Catholics throughout the country would be asked to respect the decisions of this Review Board, to be guided in conscience by its decisions.

All over the United States following the reading of the Gospel on the Sunday within the Octave of Our Lady's Immaculate Conception, Catholics would be asked to pledge the Legion their support in these words:

"In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

"I condemn indecent and immoral pictures and those which glorify crime or criminals. I promise to unite with all who protest against them.

"I acknowledge my obligation to form a right conscience about pictures that are dangerous to my moral life.

"As a member of the Legion of Decency, I pledge myself to see only good pictures. I promise further to stay away altogether from places of amusement which show pictures than can be an occasion of sin."

The Legion classes movies as "A-1"—unobjectionable for all, old or young. The second classification is "A-2"

—not for children, but suitable for adults. To quote Father Richard Felix again:

"The majority of A-2 pictures contain more or less explicit reference to sexual matters, such as conjugal relations and marital infidelity, or contain a considerable amount of evil in the plot—even though the evil is shown as evil. The average child would not be harmed, but a child might receive a shock to its innocence, or its curiosity might be aroused needlessly and with possible harm."

"B" pictures are classified as "objectionable in part" —so objectionable as to constitute for many people what Catholics call a proximate occasion of sin. Hence one could not go to a "B" picture without sufficient reason (as have, e.g., the reviewers for the Legion of Decency). Many of these pictures are offensive or suggestive. Others condone immorality.

There is a final grouping under "Class C"—condemned. These films do not so often get into the small towns. Their immorality is not even subtle. It is heavy-handed and flat-footed. It is usually considered a mortal sin to take in a "C" picture.

The Bishops of the country approved this program of action at their meeting in 1933, and it caught the imagination not only of Catholics, but of good people everywhere. There already existed a Federal Motion Picture Council of America, Inc., whose slogan was "mobilize for wholesome motion pictures." This Council, constituted almost entirely of non-Catholics, had as its General Secretary the Reverend William Scheafe Chase, supported by the Protestant Episcopal General Convention, the Northern Baptist Convention, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, the National Grange, and many other civic groups. This Fed-

eral Council promised its support to the Legion of Decency. Mrs. August Belmont, President of the Motion Picture Research Council, announced that her organization would campaign for more wholesome movies and wage a fight against the continuance of block-booking, which prevents managers of local show-houses from exhibiting pictures of their own and their patrons' choice.

In the pages of *Our Sunday Visitor* Bishop Noll wrote article after article trying to acquaint his three-million readers with the purpose and workings of the Legion. He gave a coast-to-coast talk on the subject over the Columbia Broadcasting System. He explained it to the clergy in the pages of *The Acolyte* and *The American Ecclesiastical Review.*

Diocese after diocese set up a program to insure local co-operation with the national effort. During Lent of 1934, thousands of Catholic women in the Fort Wayne Diocese made a house-to-house canvass, gathering up 60,000 signed pledges of support for the Legion.

The 400,000 men and women of Detroit's Catholic organizations swung into line. The Bishop of Monterey-Fresno wrote to the manager of every theater in his diocese. The Bishop of Fall River prepared a Lenten pastoral on the movies and had it read from every pulpit in his diocese. The Archbishop of Cincinnati ordered his pastors each to preach a strong sermon on one Sunday during Lent, at all the Masses, on the motion-picture evil as it then existed.

Such a crusade naturally did not pass unnoticed in Hollywood. Although the ratio of Catholics to the total population is only something like one to five, that ratio is one to three, or even one to two in most of the large cities east of the Mississippi, where the big theaters exist and box-office receipts are heaviest. It is true that in many sections of the country the Catholic would be

"a voice crying in the wilderness," but that is not the case in the cities and towns where three-fourths of the American Catholics live. Only one-fifth of the Catholic population dwell on farms and in villages.

The city of Chicago, for instance, is forty percent Catholic. The movie tycoons felt a clutching at the pit of their stomachs at the thought of what would happen if suddenly the managers of Chicago theaters were to report that attendance at the movies was down fifty percent, and with this cut in revenue, no lessening of operating costs. And not just Chicago, but New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, San Francisco — all dense centers of Catholicism.

The producers found that practically every Catholic periodical in the country carried the Legion ratings as a regular feature. "B" and "C" classifications were headline news—publicity in reverse, for such an odius tag on a feature was enough to cut general patronage so deeply that the film often became a financial failure.

There were the usual cries of "censorship" on the part of hypersensitive liberals. "Why should the Catholic Church dictate what we are and what we are not too see? Such cries are raised occasionally to this day.

But Bishop Noll points out that the Legion constitutes in its own order what the Pure Food and Drug Act is in another. There is no censorship involved in classifying a feature as morally dangerous or otherwise. The Legion has no tie-in with the police to enforce its recommendations. The whole program depends on the voluntary co-operation of right-minded people everywhere.

It is still governed by a Committee of Bishops under the National Catholic Welfare Conference. Bishop Noll was a member of that Committee for well over ten years.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

The War On Smut

IN August, 1937, a South Bend druggist by the name of Albert J. Dougherty came to Bishop Noll with a tale of woe. He complained that because he insisted on his right to select the publications offered for sale on the racks of his store, he was threatened with the loss of his entire trade in periodicals—including the sale even of metropolitan newspapers published outside of South Bend. The distributor had laid down the law—all or none. And Mr. Dougherty, a devout Catholic, was having considerable conscience-trouble about the moral value of some of the magazines he was being asked to peddle. He wanted Bishop Noll's advice.

When the Bishop learned that his visitor was also secretary of the St. Joseph County Pharmacist Association, comprising fifty-three druggists, he urged him not to yield without putting up a good fight. Mr. Dougherty met with the Association and persuaded them to stand firm with him against such high-handed tactics on the part of the distributors. They endorsed a resolution expressing their position. Officers of the South Bend Deanery Council of Catholic Women got behind Mr. Dougherty and threatened to patronize no magazine rack until it was purged of filth.

Mr. Dougherty next carried this resolution to the statewide convention of the Indiana Pharmaceutical Association, where it found immediate backing. Still "sore," the South Bend druggist carried his campaign up and down the country and within a year succeeded in having the Druggist Associations in sixteen states endorse his resolution to oppose block-booking of maga-

zines and the right of the seller to refuse periodicals violative of a decency code.

Bishop Noll watched all of this with great interest. In 1932 the Hierarchy, commenting on the depression, had stated that "It would be blindness not to recognize the looseness and laxity of morals which both hastened the economic chaos of the world and now plays its part in extending laxity in public morals, loss of public decency, and consequently a lowering of the standards of citizenship . . . The corruption of private and public morals wears away more surely than any other agency the foundations of a nation. The publication and unobstructed distribution of indecent books and periodicals is, at the present time, one of the greatest menaces to our national well-being."

But now, five years later, even the most superficial examination of the problem showed a situation so appalling as almost to defy any attempt at a cleanup. The sheer bulk of the publications was formidable; the motive of the publishers was a complex of profit and ideology; the moral consciousness of the public in their regard had become quite blunt; the legal code was inadequate.

There are, of course, any number of bona-fide books, pictures, and charts dealing with sex and anatomy. Then there is a sort of twilight area stretching from pure science on the one hand, through risqué material disguised as urbanity, to the borderline of the wholly pornographic—including such magazine titles as *Ardent Sexual Love, Paris Revels, Sizzling Stories, Gay Parisienne, Spicy Stories, Nudies, Tattle Tales, Pep,* and literally hundreds of others.

A random check of the newsstands made by Bishop Noll's organization in the course of a month showed over eighty articles featured, of which these examples are typical: Sex, Shame, and Selfishness; Sex-Satisfying

Lives; Sexless and Sinful Wives; Sexual Religion; The Revealing Stories of Two Passionate Lovers; Where Wild Passion Leads; Why I was an Unwedded Wife; Proxy Kisses; Sinner Ella; I Take Care of My Wimmen; Wife for a Night; On the High She's; Red Headed Venus; Always One Night; What Makes Girls Tick; Sex and Sevens; White Girl Trap; Inside Stuff; Lust Conquers All; Freelance Love; Candid Camera Nudities; When Sinners Meet, etc.

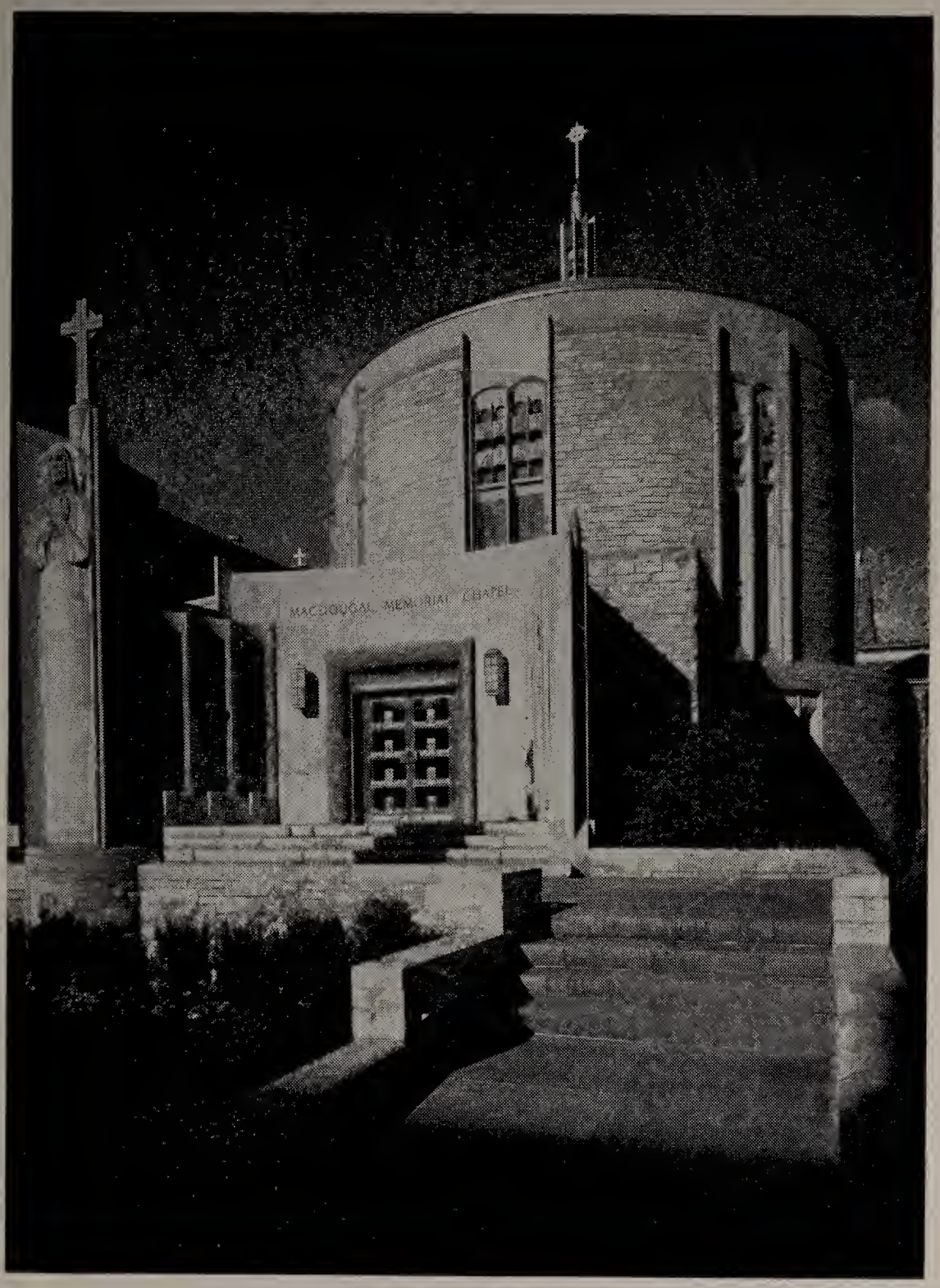
These filthy sheets—and even some of the more edifying and less "glandular" magazines, such as those featuring detective and wild-west stories—carried advertising of a highly objectionable sort (at several hundred dollars a column). One issue, chosen at random, on the inside cover solicited customers for a book offering "a solution of intimate sex difficulties." Seven other advertisements had lurid displays of books dealing with sex—one guaranteeing to teach "the art of seduction." Four offered contraceptives for sale, and several other advertisements were pushing the sale of magazines worse than the one under consideration. Especially offensive to Catholics was the display by "Charm Products Company" of a Miraculous Medal in some of the worst periodicals under the blurb, "I won fifty dollars the day I received my Miraculous Medal!"

Anyone gullible enough to answer one of these notices had his name listed for circulation among most of the purveyors of lascivious materials and found his mailbox choked with catalogues from such houses as The Eugenics Publishing Company, The Falstaff Publishing Company, Realife Photos, Free Thought Press Association, etc.

A survey showed that there were more than four hundred of these erotic periodicals in the United States with an aggregate circulation estimated at fifteen mil-

Cathedral Square in Fort Wayne takes on a new look, after new Chancery was erected at left and the Blessed Sacrament Chapel at right. Center is the newly resurfaced Cathedral.

The interior of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne, after extensive work of re-decoration had been done.



This new MacDougal Memorial Chapel occupies the southeast corner of Cathedral Square in Fort Wayne. It is a chapel of Perpetual Adoration, a haven for hundreds who visit it every day.

The northeast corner of Cathedral Square is the location of the new Chancery Office for the Diocese of Fort Wayne. It was completed early in 1952.

lion monthly. Most of them originated in New York State, although here again there was difficulty in checking because many of the titles were "one-shot" performers—put out for only one issue—while others were made up by a different printer each month. They had their origin for the most part during the depression when the public had plenty of leisure for reading. Distribution on a national basis was generally through either the American News Agency with its 90,000 stands, or the Independent News Service, controlling 160,000 stands and racks.

Magazines were not sent directly from the big news companies to all these dealers, but to regional agents who made their distribution by truck. Bishop Noll was advised that, with the exception of New Mexico, every state in the Union had a law forbidding the "publication, distribution, and the sale of indecent or lewd literature," even if in most sections the law had become a dead letter. Our country had the shameful distinction of being first throughout the world in the production of printed filth. More than a hundred of our American periodicals were forbidden circulation in Canada and Australia.

2.

THE more he studied the situation the more the Bishop became convinced that much of this printed and pictured lewdness was being produced and circulated to destroy the morals of youth in perfect keeping with Communistic objectives. Frederick Collins, in *Liberty* of November 23, 1937, had expressed a similar view, quoting Gregory Zinovief's statement that "Our party cannot be indifferent to religious questions . . . The Communist Party says what Marx says, that religion is an opiate of the people. Of course, it is very important how your anti-religious propaganda is conducted, whether it is done shrewdly or crudely."

Curiously—or, perhaps, not so curiously—it was observed that the Eugenics Publishing Company of New York was headed by a man who was also president of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism, and was also the chief publisher, or at least the distributor, of numerous books dealing with the subject of sex, so written and so priced that they would attract the young reader.

Worse even than all this was a type of literature and pictures that was wholly depraved—not just naughtiness or "art studies" featuring undraped women. These things were printed descriptions and photographs of people engaged in the lowest conceivable types of perversion and degeneracy. These had mysteriously passed from back-alley and hand-to-hand purveyance to availability in filling stations, candy and stationery shops, hotel-rooms, garages, auto-supply houses, restaurants, Bar-B-Q's, Dine-and-Dance places, lunch rooms, soda fountains, and grocery stores—this, according to reports from United States Postal Inspectors. In fact, men were hired to distribute them gratis to children as they came out of the schools.

At the time, the late Courtney Ryley Cooper reported that it was not uncommon for school children, especially high-school students, to turn an extra penny for themselves by peddling these articles among their schoolmates.

"Obscenity has grown upon itself so greatly," he wrote, "that the selling of it now employs thousands of persons. This, in turn, has brought about a marked increase in promiscuity, especially among the young which has, in turn, resulted in a sale for contraceptives so large that the demand has tripled within the last few years. The step beyond this is a marked increase in perversion.

Many high school children of today know more about these acts than the average adult possessed ten or fifteen years ago."

Cooper said that in an entire circuit of America he failed to find a city where officers reported no such things as cartoon books around the schools, "these 'cartoons' depicting widely known persons, running about naked together, and indulging in every form of perversion known to Krafft-Ebing."

With the assistance of the Post Office Department, he conducted a two-months' investigation: "From one publishing firm alone, which is adept in worming its way through the loopholes of present tax laws, came offers of more than a hundred titles having to do with homosexuality, licentiousness, and what is known in our best degenerate circles as 'spanking'. . .

"The entire United States is now divided into districts of an average of a hundred miles' radius, and served from adjacent big cities. These districts are fought for, apportioned by syndicate owners or politically strong gangsters in the obscenity business, in exactly the same manner in which booze-selling in city districts was allotted during the Prohibition era. The peddlers who 'own' these districts do not miss a single city, town, hamlet, or cross-road; the type of obscenity described in this chapter often may be bought as easily by those who know in a town of one hundred population as in Chicago, or Philadelphia, or New York City. Sometimes the spot of sale will be the general store, or the filling station, or the corner sandwich stand . . ."

The results of this vicious flood were apparent. From 1929 to 1939 the growth of salacious literature had been without equal in history. Correspondingly, sex crimes during the same period more than doubled, one out of every four being committed by persons under

twenty. While crime in general decreased in the United States during 1939, sex offenses increased seven per cent. Rape cases were up fifty per cent since 1934.

Cooper noted that "A majority of these cases are of the forcible type. The old plaint of statutory rape is becoming steadily more difficult to prove," he added, "for the reason that evidence of previous intercourse by the victim is valid defense. There have been startling increases in degenerate offenses and evidence of perversions, running into thousands of cases a year in larger cities. With all these things in mind, it is highly necessary that obscenity be appraised for what it has become, not an adjunct of minor infractions, but an important and dangerous causation of many of our worst and most revolting crimes."

(Some nine or ten years later, Dr. Alfred Kinsey was to throw an interesting sidelight on all these developments, in his rather too-well publicized report.)

3.

BISHOP NOLL wrote up these shocking data in a lengthy memorandum, which he printed and carried with him to the meeting of the Hierarchy in the fall of 1937. Then one afternoon, each Bishop found a copy of that memorandum on his chair as he returned to the conference room from lunch. Bishop Noll next took the floor and guided the Bishops through his report, expanding it and answering the various questions that were brought up. So horrified were the Most Reverend Gentlemen that they promptly placed Bishop Noll at the head of a committee to report back with some suitable program for action. On Bishop Noll's committee were placed Bishops Gibbons of Albany, Keough of Providence, Sheil, Auxiliary of Chicago, and Vehr of Denver.

These Bishops met at the home of Bishop Sheil in January, 1938, and there, after going through a formidable stack of monthly periodicals and indecent cards and pictures, they formed an organization to be called the "National Organization for Decent Literature." Lest they be accused of arbitrary action by magazine editors, they drafted a Code, couched in general terms, to serve as a sort of rule in judging the contents of any publication.

Reporting back to the Hierarchy that fall, they said that "It is clearly the duty of the Bishops of the country to assume the leadership in this momentous struggle, and under the divine guidance to organize, direct, and inspire the splendid forces at their command." So the Hierarchy gave the nod and the crusade was launched early in the following year.

As head of this N. O. D. L., Bishop Noll found himself plunged into a welter of correspondence and interviews. The Bishops of the country gave splendid cooperation, of course, most of them appointing chairmen in their respective dioceses to further the drive—all of whom kept in close touch with Bishop Noll in Fort Wayne.

The Acolyte was designated official organ of the campaign and from the start its every issue featured the Code:

"Publications may be judged objectionable which

"a) glorify crime and the criminal:

"b) are largely 'sexy' in content;

"c) make a habit of carrying articles on 'illicit love';

"d) carry disreputable advertising.

"e) have illustrations and pictures bordering on the indecent."

Immediately reports began streaming in from committees all over the country, nominating dozens of magazines for a "black list," which Bishop Noll promptly compiled and made a monthly feature of *The Acolyte.*

The worst of these magazines had never been granted the second-class mail privilege, and hence they had to be delivered by express, freight, truck, bus, and in some cases even by airplane. They could not be put out of business except by suit before a Federal Court. But there were many among them that did enjoy the second-class mail privilege—to which they were not entitled — and these were brought to the attention of the United States Postmaster General, who withdrew the low-priced mailing privilege from more than a hundred of them over a period of three years.

Lest the N. O. D. L. lay itself open to suit for libel Bishop Noll was always careful never to designate blacklisted periodicals "indecent." Instead, he would simply report that the magazines listed were not in conformity with the organization's code.

Within three months, twelve of the more offensive magazines had gone out of business, while others were in process of revamping their editorial policies.

"Officers of big publishing companies, capitalized at many millions, have visited the Chairman of the committee to talk matters over," he wrote in *The Acolyte* for May, 1939, "and have agreed to adjust the character of their hitherto banned publications to the code of the N. O. D. L."

Those conversations must have been priceless. A stenographic transcription would have made highly entertaining reading: The Bishop on the one hand, with scriptural simplicity regarding the pre-eminence of virtue over profit, and on the other a succession of hard-bitten publishers, most of them quite as convinced of

the pre-eminence of profit over every other conceivable consideration—trying to reconcile the interests of both God and Mammon, since for the moment at least the forces of goodness were holding the whip.

An inkling of this creeps into Bishop Noll's report that "One great result of these interviews has been a change of attitude on the part of the publishers towards the subject of 'love.' We made it clear to the men who came to us for a conference that they had been identifying lust and passion with love, and have been promoting that notion in young America."

One wonders how sincere the publishers were in confessing the error of their ways.

Bishop Noll was not overstating the facts when he reported that the publishing tycoons were beating a track to his door. He was visited by the president of the Fawcett Publications which consisted of nineteen magazines with an aggregate circulation running to five millions, and together they went over the current issues.

The Dell Publishing Company found nine of their twenty-two monthly magazines on the N. O. D. L. list. Two of them were discontinued and a representative of the company called on the Bishop to report that his firm had done its best to rid the offensive magazines of their most objectionable features. He wanted six of them stricken from the black-list.

"Our answer was that they would have to remain clean long enough for us to become assured that they were purged permanently."

Indicative of the cooperation extended by many of the publishers was a letter from the Dell Company:

"I have arranged that you be sent copies of future issues for examination just as soon as they are published. You will find us sympathetic with the objects of the committee and fully cooperative with its efforts, and

we shall be glad, from time to time, to receive your recommendations and observations with respect to the contents of the magazines on the list which you and I discussed."

And so it was with the Hearst Publications, Standard Magazines, and many a similar firm.

In the meantime, seventy dioceses throughout the country had enrolled in the crusade, with vigilance committees in each parish making life miserable for any news-agent who ventured to display offensive periodicals on his racks. Some of the Bishops—notably in Cincinnati, Denver, Providence, Fargo and Galveston—brought the matter before their State Legislatures and had new laws enacted to make the distribution and purchase of lewd magazines much more difficult.

The N. O. D. L. went even farther. Through the efforts of promoters of the campaign over the country, the cause was taken before State Legislatures, and new laws appeared, tightening up those already existing. There was also a small group that studied the distribution of magazines through Second-Class Mail Privilege, a privilege not accorded any magazine of a lewd character. Where this group found violations they immediately reported to the Post Office Department, and the offenders found themselves faced not only with a diminishing circulation, but also with explanations called for by that Federal authority.

But when the publishers offered to send him advance proofs of their several periodicals, the Bishop saw that he could no longer direct the program single-handed. Instead, he engaged the services of a layman in Washington, D. C., who was given office space at the headquarters of the National Catholic Welfare Conference. Such an adjutant could, with more propriety, take care of the more gross outcroppings of obscenity—

postcards, calendars, and the like—situated as he was within walking distance of the Post Office Department and the F.B.I.

4.

AFTER the "regular" magazines had been pretty well straightened out, the N.O.D.L. turned its attention to the problem of comics, which had begun to increase. Prosecuting Attorneys in various cities were beginning to report, from the confession of youngsters indicted for crimes of violence, that the defendants, many of them, had merely followed patterns set before them in the so-called comic books.

Bishop Noll's Washington representative came out to South Bend for a conference with Mr. Dougherty (the pharmacist mentioned earlier). Mr. Dougherty had almost a complete file of current comics, so both looked them over and drafted a code according to which they might be classified as offensive or unoffensive. The code was accepted by a resolution of the Indiana Pharmaceutical Association, and since that time by many other state organizations of druggists.

The N. O. D. L. is now functioning throughout the entire country, occupied chiefly with the regular magazines, with comics, and with those many little books, low-priced, and very detrimental to public morals.

Although it was founded by the Catholic Hierarchy, it is not a Catholic organization. In most places, Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, civic bodies of all kinds, are working together to keep the magazine racks clean for youth; and in fact, where Catholics are not numerous, the N. O. D. L. is operated chiefly by non-Catholics.

Bishop Noll has continued as national head of the organization from the time it was formed in 1938, until this present writing. Currently, his Committee consists

of Archbishop Schulte of Indianapolis; Bishop Bennett of Lafayette; Bishop Dearden of Pittsburgh and Bishop O'Brien, of Chicago. One member of the committee is replaced every year at the Bishops' meeting, the new member usually being chosen by Bishop Noll. It has always been his policy to have the committee constituted of Bishops not too far from Fort Wayne so that it may be easier to have a full meeting whenever the occasion arises.

Until November, 1951 current magazines were reviewed by a group of men at South Bend; the so-called Pocket Books, by a Pittsburgh group under the direction of Father Lachner; and the Comics were rated by a committee formed by the Archbishop of Chicago. Then the names of the periodicals found objectionable were sent to *Our Sunday Visitor* Press to be published in *The Priest*. But now all classifications are reviewed in Chicago by a large force appointed by the Cardinal, and working under Bishop Noll's Committee.

The fight is still on. The workings of evil to corrupt both the youth and the older people of America have not ceased, nor has the battle against them become less violent. Each year there appear on the market new magazines to replace those driven to cover, and in some cases publishers were shrewd enough to change the titles of their magazines frequently, to have the periodical published in New York one month and in Illinois the next. Some hid completely the place of publication until that escape was covered by a new law.

The movies have slipped across the line, too, but here there is always more chance to catch the producer, as it takes so long for the picture to get to the public. In that time the Legion can issue its warning. The Organization for Decent Literature has a tougher fight, a fight that will probably never cease.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Catholics And The Census

BISHOP NOLL has always been interested in the problem of just how many Catholics there are in the United States and where they are located. The statistics in *The Catholic Directory* are hardly reliable, based as they are on reports from pastors—reports that are too conservative if not actually obsolete.

In 1934, the Bishop decided to do what he could to remedy this situation. Louis Kenedy, publisher of *The Directory,* was at the same time vice-president of the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies. The Bishop wrote him, asking whether his organization would back a plea to the United States Bureau of Census for the inclusion of three questions in the forms to be used by census-takers in 1940.

This national census, of course, takes place every ten years; but among the many questions asked of the individual citizen there is never any reference to religion.

Beginning with the year 1906, the Government took up a separate census on "Religious Denominations." This was repeated in 1916 and 1926, but no appropriation was made for the purpose in 1936. The Bishop felt that this was not much help, anyway, since its findings were gathered from the pastors of all denominations rather than from the people directly—in other words, its figures approximated the *Catholic Directory* data.

At the Bishop's meeting of 1938, Bishop Noll was appointed chairman of a Census Committee, with the late Bishop Griffin of Springfield, Illinois, and Archbishop Vehr of Denver as his assistants. In the meantime,

Mr. Kenedy had risen to the presidency of the Religious Statisticians, in which the Federal Council of Churches (representing twenty-seven denominations) had membership, with the Lutherans and Southern Baptists affiliated separately, together with the various Jewish bodies.

Bishop Noll proposed the addition of these three questions to the census form:

Are you a believer in God?

Are you affiliated with any religious body?

If so, which?

Mr. Kenedy presented this suggestion to the statisticians and they voted unanimously in its favor. Later, the representative of the Jewish bodies withdrew his vote, but that still left all the Christian bodies favoring it. A report to this effect was mailed to the late President Roosevelt who, in acknowledging its receipt, said he was forwarding it to the head of the Department of Commerce, under which the Bureau of Census functions. That was the end of it.

This was late in 1939, just when the government presses were ready to run off the census forms.

A Mr. Murphy, an Episcopalian, was head of the Bureau of Census, and had assured Bishop Noll that if he could get a resolution passed at the Bishops' meeting in favor of including those questions he was sure that the Department of Commerce would yield. Bishop Noll asked for the resolution and it was passed unanimously.

The questions did not appear on the 1940 forms. In 1950, the Christian religious bodies were told that in view of the 1948 Supreme Court decision in the McCollum case, their request for the inclusion of those questions in the latest census would be futile.

The Bishop has always held that the Catholic population of the United States approximates 35,000,000 rather than the classic figure of 28,000,000. He thinks, for instance, of the nearly 1,000,000 Italians in the City of New York who are Catholic at heart and who would say so to a census-taker, even though four out of five of them would likely be unknown to their pastors. Every census in his own Diocese of Fort Wayne has always disclosed that at least 20% more people call themselves Catholic than the pastors allow for in their annual reports.

Of the first million men enrolled in the Army just before World War II, 31% avowed themselves Catholic —which would suggest a national total of 41,000,000. Allowing even for the larger families found among Catholics, which may explain their quota proportion in the armed services, the Bishop thinks there should still be nearly 35,000,000. With the city people of today living like gypsies, flitting from apartment to apartment, the usual pastor finds it physically impossible to take an accurate census. His parish is in almost constant flux. Yet 81% of all Catholics live in the cities.

The head of the Census Bureau told Bishop Noll of his certainty that the official Catholic figures must fall far below the actual total, while he thought that the reports received from Protestant organizations were exaggerated. He observed that the names on the books of most Protestant parishes remain there whether or not the people are practicing their religion—unless one or another of the parishioners puts in a formal request for a transfer. This does not hold true for Catholics. As soon as a Catholic pastor discovers that one of his flock has married outside the Faith or is rarely at Mass, he strikes his name from the records and no longer reports him as a Catholic to the Chancery Office.

In this connection, Cardinal Hayes once told Bishop Noll that when he was made pastor of St. Stephen's, New York, he asked his predecessor—the late Bishop Cusack of Albany—how many parishioners he had. The former pastor told him that in round numbers it came to about 4,000. The Cardinal checked an attendance at Mass over a few Sundays. Then he felt that there must be a mistake. It looked as though he had 8,000 rather than 4,000 parishioners. His curiosity aroused, he instituted a systematic house-to-house canvass, and discovered that he had 8,000 self-confessed Catholics within his parish boundaries.

It was the same with St. Peter's in Barclay Street. This parish is more than a hundred years old. In its day, it served quite a large population, but now it is in the heart of the business district and has come to be regarded as a church chiefly for transients. Cardinal Hayes told the Bishop that when he asked Msgr. McGean, who was then pastor, how many parishioners he had, the Monsignor had answered, "Practically none." The Cardinal asked him to make a check. It turned up 8,000 people claiming to be Catholics. They were of all nationalities, many of them claiming a connection with some national church elsewhere in the city. But the fact was that they were not registered anywhere, and probably were, in large part, not practicing members.

Bishop Noll has come to suspect that there are forces in the country who, for motives of their own, are not anxious to have it certified that ours is an overwhelmingly religious population; that there are others who fear that an accurate check, besides enhancing Catholic prestige, might diminish their own stature.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

The Light Of The World

EARLY in the year 1936, the Bishop received a letter from Topeka, Kansas. As he was slitting it open, a dollar bill fluttered down on his desk-blotter. It was from Mrs. Marjorie Lambert Russell, editor of *The Earth,* a house-organ of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad. Mrs. Russell intended her dollar as the first contribution toward a national drive to be promoted by *Our Sunday Visitor,* a drive that would place in Washington, D. C., a colossal statue of Christ as the "Light of the World." Since Washington was filled with statues of all kinds, there should be room for one representing the greatest personage and human benefactor of all times.

Impressed with Mrs. Russell's idea, Bishop Noll ran her letter in the paper and immediately a torrent of contributions came pouring in—large and small—until the total finally leveled off at $115,000.

In the meantime, the Bishop sounded out various people in Washington. They liked the idea, too, but they thought that a downtown site would cost even more than the statue. Besides, they pointed out, a monument of such proportions should be set off by a small park if it were to appear at best advantage.

On the Virginia side of the Potomac, overlooking the city, they found just the place. Their fifty-foot statue would not only appear very impressive, but it would be visible throughout much of downtown Washington. Bishop Noll got the approval of the city's Designing Committee, when a better thought occurred to him.

He knew that the National Catholic Welfare Conference—representing the entire Church in the United States—was planning to build new headquarters. In 1936 the offices were housed in an old building in which Sisters of the Holy Cross once operated an academy for girls. It was, of course, not fire-proof, nor was its capacity adequate to the growing needs of the N.C.W.C. Bishop Noll proposed that his fund be used for the facade of a contemplated new eight-story building, to serve as a suitable setting for his statue. His proposition was accepted. An architect was engaged and the building went up, its facade of white Indiana limestone without a single window. A wide and deep niche runs from the foundation to the top, with a stone pedestal for the statue at the base. But who would execute the statue?

In a letter to the Catholic press, Father Thomas Coakley of Sacred Heart Church, Pittsburgh, suggested that the affair be thrown open to national competition, which would draw the best artistic talent in the country; that those who competed and were awarded prizes should be compensated for their work; and that a jury of national reputation and competence be selected to judge the work of the various contestants.

The *Liturgical Arts* magazine reprinted Father Coakley's letter and showed such an intense interest in the project that Bishop Noll and his recently formed committee turned the contest over to their direction.

It was stipulated that the competitors should submit three-foot models showing their concept of Christ as "Light of the World." More than sixty artists submitted models for inspection by a committee of three sculptors who had not entered the contest. These were to choose the three best, and then allow the makers to compete among themselves for the execution of another model

each. If one of these satisfied the Bishops' Committee in charge, its creator would be commissioned to execute the large statue.

Pictures of the prize-winning models were carried by *Time* magazine, and the country was horrified. The statues were so modern as to be grotesque, almost blasphemous. Neither artists nor jury seemed to have grasped the idea of Jesus as a "Teacher."

The Catholic press was non-committal. People did not know what to say. Here was the judgment of their "betters" in art, and yet they could not bring themselves to applaud these shocking monstrosities, so the Bishops ended by throwing out all the prize-winners.

About this time, Eugene Kormendi, a Hungarian sculptor visiting the United States, found himself unable to return home because of the war. He had just completed some monumental statuary in London and had decided to visit our country before going back to his native land.

He lived for a time in Milwaukee, where he did some excellent work in bronze. Later, he was engaged by the School of Sculpture at Notre Dame. After studying Kormendi's achievements, Bishop Noll recommended him to his committee for the execution of the Washington statue. This sculptor first prepared the three-foot model which, with a few small alterations, met with the Bishops' approval. He was next authorized to prepare a five-foot model in plastine which would in turn, be transferred to plaster of Paris.

This model was taken to Chicago where it was blown up into a twenty-two foot figure. It was then sent to New York to be cast in green bronze.

Finally, in the spring of 1949, the imposing statue of Christ, the Light of the World, was installed, unveiled

and blessed by the Apostolic Delegate, at 1312 Massachusetts Avenue, headquarters of N. C. W. C. Archbishop McNicholas accepted the statue in the name of the Catholic Hierarchy, and Bishop Noll told the story concerning its first proposal and its realization.

2.

Over on the other side of Washington a project is under way in which Bishop Noll and *Our Sunday Visitor* have always had a deep interest.

As rector of the Catholic University, Bishop Thomas Shahan had conceived the idea of building on the campus a national shrine in honor of the Blessed Virgin's Immaculate Conception, the title under which our country has been dedicated to her, so he had the firm of Maginnis and Walsh draw up plans and specifications for a huge basilica, along Byzantine lines. Then he asked Bishop Noll to publicize his idea and to urge people, through *Our Sunday Visitor,* to make contributions. *Our Sunday Visitor* led the way with a donation of $5,000.

A persuasive and charming talker, Bishop Shahan paid a call on "Tom" O'Neill, owner of O'Neill & Company, a Baltimore department store. As he told it to Bishop Noll:

"I asked the aging gentlemen, who had no children, whether he would not be willing to build this National Shrine at an estimated cost of something under $5,000,000. He buried his head in his hands for nearly a minute, and then lifted it and turned toward his wife to say, 'Ma, I think we shall have to build this church for the Bishop.'

"I was very happy, of course," Bishop Shahan said, "but within a week Mr. O'Neill died suddenly, apparently before he had changed his will. It looked as though

the Blessed Mother did not want her National Shrine to be erected and paid for by a single individual, but by her many clients over the country at large."

On September 23, 1920, an actual beginning was made with the funds at hand when the corner stone was laid by Cardinal Gibbons. Bishop Noll—still pastor at Huntington—was there on that occasion. The first Mass was offered in the Crypt by Msgr. Bernard McKenna on April 20, 1924, with Bishop Shahan preaching the sermon. The work went on, slowly but steadily, and Mary's clients, over a period of twenty years, provided $2,000,000 to pay for the Crypt.

The coming of World War II stopped all but the most urgent private building projects. But following the war, the Bishops, as they hurried back and forth across the campus, became increasingly aware of this great monument, still languishing in a basement stage after twenty-five years.

The late Archbishop Curley of Baltimore, requested Bishop Noll to recommend to the Bishops at their 1946 meeting, an early campaign to procure the funds needed to erect the designed superstructure over the Crypt. Reluctantly the Bishop yielded after Monsignor McCormick, of the Catholic University, assured him that many prelates were much interested in the completion of the project.

In 1946, then, a plurality of the Bishops present agreed to cooperate towards the completion of the superstructure for the centenary of the promulgation of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception in 1954.

A fund-raising committee was chosen under the chairmanship of Bishop Noll, consisting of Archbishops Cushing of Boston, Mitty of San Francisco, Murray of St. Paul, Rummel of New Orleans, O'Boyle of Washing-

ton, Bishops Ireton of Richmond, and Kearney of Rochester. A five-year collection plan was proposed, leaving to the Ordinary of each diocese to determine whether and when diocesan collections would be ordered.

The ultimate goal is seven million, or a dollar per family throughout the country over a five-year period. That means only 20c per family each year, or 5c per person—surely a solicited offering which should terrify no one. At the present writing the fund already realized is, in round numbers, $3,400,000. When work on the superstructure actually begins, it is believed that the target will be reached quite speedily.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Bishop Noll: Shepherd

HIS Eminence Samuel Cardinal Stritch, Archbishop of Chicago, called Bishop Noll "a great pathfinding pioneer" in U. S. Catholic Action during ceremonies at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Wayne on June 29, 1950, marking the silver episcopal jubilee of Bishop Noll.

The text of Cardinal Stritch's sermon follows:

Today Bishop Noll celebrates his silver episcopal jubilee, here in this Cathedral Church of the Immaculate Conception, where he was baptized, received his first Holy Communion, was confirmed, was ordained to the holy priesthood, celebrated his first Solemn Mass, was consecrated Bishop, and for 25 years has occupied its episcopal throne.

All of us here today are thankful to Bishop Noll, to his priests and people for giving us the opportunity to be here and to join with him in his jubilee thanksgiving. Many of us have been associated very closely with the Bishop through these 25 years and have come to know him and esteem him, but this jubilee is more than just the ordinary jubilee of a bishop.

Bishop Noll has been so much a part of the life of the Church in the United States and even in the world during these 25 years that millions and millions of Catholics who have received from him precious spiritual gifts are taking part in this jubilee celebration, and we feel that we are here representing them and expressing their fervent congratulations and thanksgiving to God.

It is the high office of a bishop to feed the flock committed to his care. He is the witness of Christ. He is the

dispenser of the mysteries of Christ, and he in the name of and by the authority of Christ governs his diocese. All his functions and duties are comprehended in the simple word of shepherd.

In the Old Testament those who prefigured Christ were shepherds. When God gave to his people a king, he chose a shepherd king. All through the Old Testament, and particularly in the books of the prophets, the office of governing and ruling was described in the metaphor of the shepherd.

The deep sublime meaning is clear. The shepherd tends and watches and defends his sheep. There is in him nothing of arrogance, nothing of inordinate selfishness. He labors, he suffers, he works for his sheep.

In the New Testament, our Blessed Saviour presents Himself to us in the parable of the Good Shepherd. "I know mine and mine know Me" was the challenge of the Bishop and the Shepherd of our souls. It is not strange that when He commissioned Peter to be the universal shepherd of the Church, our Blessed Saviour should have used the words: "Feed My lambs and feed My sheep."

In dangerous days, when guardedly the first Christian artists painted in frescoe in the catacombs our Blessed Saviour, they depicted Him as the Good Shepherd. There is in the Lateran Museum at Rome a marble statue of our Blessed Saviour which was done in the first centuries of the Church, and it is the statue of the Good Shepherd.

There are some early Christian decorated glasses still extant in museums on which we find the figure of the Good Shepherd, and when, after the Edict of Milan, there was built great Christian basilicas, almost without exception their central mosaics depicted the Good Shepherd. And so all down through the history of the

Church we find all the duties and all the obligations of the bishop comprehended in the simple word "shepherd."

Foremost among the duties of the shepherd is that of feeding his flock. The bishop feeds when he teaches the Gospel of Christ. He does not teach the learning of mere scholars, but the wisdom of Christ, and Christ Crucified. He does not teach as other teachers, but as one having authority, for he teaches as the witness of Christ.

There are times, as the Apostle tells us, when the shepherd must, with real courage, point out errors, refute base calumnies, rebuke and condemn. Look at the story of the episcopate of the Church and see how it is colored with the red blood of martyrs, who chose death in suffering rather than stop teaching the Gospel of Christ. See in our own day in countries where the Church is brutally and barbarously persecuted how uncompromisingly the bishops speak forth the Gospel of Christ and defend their right as witnesses of that Gospel.

Cardinal Mindszenty, Archbishop Stepinac and many other bishops are in prison today because they refused to sacrifice one iota of the Gospel of Christ in their teaching. It is a glorious thing—this unswerving courage of the bishops in teaching the Gospel of Christ, in feeding their flocks.

Now the witness of Christ must know his age and all the currents of that age. He must understand the dangers which threaten his flock. Fearlessly he must point out these dangers and at the same time seek the conversion of those who err.

His denunciation of dangers and evil is not forensic. It is with a deep love in his soul for those who are the victims of errors that he exposes their fallacies and denounces their calumnies.

In our age and time and country there is much ignorance of the Church. Our Blessed Savior, when John sent his disciples to ask the question, answered, "Come and see." So the bishop seeks always to bring even those who in ignorance calumniate the Church to see the real Christ.

There is much secularism in the thought of our age. It is not always atheistic, but its want of bringing out the reality of God and the reality of Christ make it in practice sheer materialism.

This secularism is at the core of the corruption of family life, the taking of God out of the textbook of the child and of the youth and the want of a deep moral sense in society. It is a disintegrating force. It begets chaos and war. It is in fact a denial of the Gospel.

The bishop exposes this secularism, points out its evils and seeks to teach the social man his obligations to his God. His charity is so wide that he embraces all men and, while protecting his own sheep, he is ever seeking the sheep that are not of his fold.

All this explains the creative zeal of the good shepherd. He understands the changes of the times, but he knows that there is an immutable constant which must be preserved. He interprets the moral law in the terms of the actual experiences of his people. He sets up organizations and works and agencies and seeks in every possible way to feed the flock committed to his care and to bring "the other sheep" to the fold of Christ.

When we look at the immediate work of Bishop Noll in the Diocese of Fort Wayne, it is the creativeness of his zeal that astounds us. Here in these 25 years have come at his invitation many religious families. The system of Catholic grade schools here is a model, and the fine

high schools erected by Bishop Noll show his zeal for the adolescents of his flock.

The Catholic Youth organization has well been judged a model for other dioceses. It is organized with that outstanding genius for organization which is the gift of the Bishop, and its activities are so coordinated that it provides at once healthy recreational activities and opportunities for cultural progress.

The organization of the Catholic apostolate for men and for women in the Diocese of Fort Wayne has been used time and time again by other bishops for their dioceses and has stimulated zeal in the lay apostolate which reaches into every corner of the diocese.

These are only a few of the creations of the zeal of Bishop Noll in his diocese. There are the churches he has built, the institutions of charity and, of course, that educational institution which is the apple of his eye, his seminary.

In pointing out particularly these creations of the Bishop's zeal in the field of the lay apostolate, I want to emphasize that in Catholic lay action here in the United States, Bishop Noll has been a great pathfinding pioneer.

But as I said in the beginning of my sermon, we simply cannot limit the creativeness of the zeal of Bishop Noll to works which are just diocesan. Already when he was a young priest, he interested himself in the Catholic press.

He became alarmed at the spread of poison for souls in those activities of the press in our country which misrepresented and calumniated the Church and also in those activities of the press in our country which were disseminating venomous social doctrines and philosophies.

He set up in 1912 *Our Sunday Visitor.* We know the

sequence. *Our Sunday Visitor* today has the largest circulation of any Catholic paper in the world. We know the excellence of its staff and the effectiveness of its work.

Through all these years of his episcopate, there have been no issues of *Our Sunday Visitor* which have not had articles from the pen of Bishop Noll. This strong activity in the apostolate of the Catholic press in our country is so well known that even the humblest of our people esteem Bishop Noll.

The indirect work of *Our Sunday Visitor* in stimulating the Catholic press in the country simply cannot be estimated. Bishop Noll was a charter member of the National Catholic Press Association and through the years has been actively interested in its work.

He also set up the periodical, *The Family Digest,* which now enjoys a circulation of more than 150,000. In 1925 he began issuing *The Acolyte,* which in 1945 became *The Priest.*

He is the author of many books. All of us know that most helpful little volume, "Father Smith Instructs Jackson," which has gone through 60 large editions.

His other books have been timely. If controversial, they have been constructive in their presentation of sound Catholic truth. It is just simply impossible to think of the history of the Catholic press during these 25 years without having the figure of Bishop Noll before you.

Everybody knows the deep understanding charity of Bishop Noll for the missions. He sponsored the Society of Missionary Catechists, who through mission fields go about teaching Catechism and ministering to stray souls the truths of the Gospel.

These missionaries have their motherhouse here in the Diocese of Fort Wayne, and Victory Noll will always

proclaim the understanding charity of Bishop Noll for the missions of the Church.

In 1925 Bishop Noll was made treasurer of the American Board of Catholic Missions, and ever since, with devotion and distinction, has served in that office and as a member of the board. As the Chairman of this board, I want to say that very much of the help that has come through the board to our Home Missions has been due to the interest and the zeal of Bishop Noll. In all the awakening of the mission conscience of our people during these past 25 years, Bishop Noll has been outstanding.

Perhaps better than anybody else in the Hierarchy, he came to realize the proximate occasions of sin lurking in the moving picture and in indecent publications. His work had brought him in contact with these important influences on the people. He longed to see these powerful influences do a good and constructive work.

He was one of the first members of the Legion of Decency committee and since its beginning has been the chairman of the National Organization for Decent Literature. Having had the opportunity of seeing Bishop Noll at work in fighting in these fields proximate occasions of sin and dangers to faith and seeking to make theatre and press beneficent social influences, I can attest the really great work which he has done.

Bishop Noll has served 17 years as a member of the Administrative Board of the National Catholic Welfare Conference. During most of that time he was chairman of the Department of Lay organizations. We who have sat with him in meetings and have seen him discharge his duties know that he has made the National Catholic Welfare Conference richer and better.

The National Catholic Welfare Conference building

in Washington exists today because Bishop Noll, through *Our Sunday Visitor,* raised $119,000 for the erection of its facade, which is an appropriate background for that great statue, "Christ, the Light of the World," also donated by *Our Sunday Visitor.*

In this large work of the Church in the United States, Bishop Noll has displayed his zeal and taught all of us that real zeal is creative. Just now he is the head of the Bishops' committee for raising the funds necessary to complete the national shrine of Our Immaculate Lady on the campus of the Catholic university in Washington. It is fitting that to him should go this work of giving a nation's tribute to its patroness, the Virgin Immaculate.

At the risk of being tedious by going over things known to all of you, I have recited a few of the creations of the zeal of Bishop Noll. The comment may well be that in his life there have been no moments of idleness. Even a cursory glance at his record makes us wonder how one man, even a great good man, could have done so many things for the Church.

The answer is clear. Bishop Noll has one passion, one vehement passion, one almost boundless passion, and that is his love for the Church. Love is always creative, and love finds the way to opportune inventions.

Granted his indisputable natural talents, his great industry and vigor, we can only explain Bishop Noll's 25 years in the episcopate by pointing out his passionate love for the Church, and in his passionate love for the Church he loves all men in Christ.

Many with the information which he has had at hand would have been tempted to pen words of hate and words of bitter bitterness. You will find none of this in the activities of Bishop Noll.

He has sought to reach out and invite all men to see

what he has seen in the clearness of his faith and to find peace in unity at the foot of the Cross.

We congratulate Bishop Noll today. The word congratulations on this occasion seems rather meaningless. We join with him in his jubilee hymn of thanksgiving, and we for our part thank God that He has given during these 25 years to Fort Wayne and the Church in the United States Bishop Noll. Ad Multos Annos.

Epilogue

THIS Jubilee gift for a great churchman is ready for wrapping up. I have lived with it for the better part of a year, and putting it together has been a labor of love. But now, as it leaves my hands, I am fearful over the thought that some may think that this—one man's tribute—contains all that should be said on Bishop Noll.

It doesn't. When I started, I thought the book would be so largely a history of *Our Sunday Visitor* that my intimate knowledge of that paper qualified me as a biographer. However, my research had scarcely begun when I realized with mingled admiration and dismay that *Our Sunday Visitor* was only a small part—one tessera—of the mosaic of Bishop Noll's life. The adequate setting-forth of that life would challenge—and I hope will challenge—the greatest biographer.

The present writer is not that. He has missed much and is conscious of the book's inadequacy. He feels keenly that a biography, which should measure up to the stature of the man it records, can be no bigger than the biographer.

The whole justification for the book is in its subject, and that, as you see, is justification enough.

Richard Ginder